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Australian Garden HISTORY



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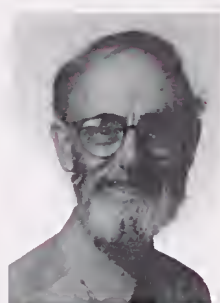
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FRONT COVER

Morgoret Stones,
Helionthus onnus
(sunflower), 1992,
watercolour, National
Gallery of Victoria.
(see article on p. 13)



The AGHS winter seminar held in Canberra last year addressed the issue *Towards an Australian Garden Style*. At the conclusion, a panel discussed this topic with the audience. As then, I will start with the question: is 'style' the right word, or is 'ethos' better? For me ethos is, because style engages with the idea of categories of space and then inevitably involves ideas of stylishness, taste and quality. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that all landscapes – including gardens – are formed by taste because they are connected with expressions of human identity. The difficulty arises when we express approbation – impose – through notions of good taste.

Ethos, on the other hand, refers to people's characteristic *spirit* or *attitude*, individually or collectively. This seems to me to fit the idea and ideal of the garden. I must declare here that my interest and comments concentrate on ordinary, everyday gardens, where the garden – or yard – as a space becomes place: a place of memory, values and creativity. A place which is encoded with meanings.

In delving into an Australian ethos, we need to remember that all gardens are representations reflecting associations of ideas. This is admirably summarised by John Dixon Hunt with his comment that 'Gardens, too, mean rather than are. Their various signs are constituted of all the elements that compose them... signs to be read by outsiders in time and space for what they tell of a certain society.' All landscapes mean and are a reflection of who we are. So, when we see a recreated cottage garden, rather than take the moral high ground of the critic scornful of reproduced nostalgia, I prefer to ask of what does the garden say as a repository of popular culture.

Criticism of recreations – the cottage garden, the English garden (is there such a beast?) – is matched by the self-righteous criticism of suburbia as a cultural desert. Yet gardens and backyards are essential elements of suburbia. They have 'a way of talking about... change, family, community, childhood and the tenuous habits we sometimes imagine as tradition.' Here Chris Healey in *Beasts of Suburbia* reminds us that suburbia is a state of mind. For me then, gardens are an essential part of that state of mind.

One of the most important aspects of the creative act of design, including gardens, is that of cultural context and *genius loci* (spirit of place). Alexander Pope's exhortation in *An Epistle to Lord Burlington* (1731) to 'consult the *Genius* of the *Place* in all' still applies. It means having regard not just for the physical qualities of a site (soil, water, climate), but also the context in which we are creating a garden and for whom. Design style here seems not to matter to me. What is important is the design elements, how we use them and put them together and what they say to us as user or observer. Gardens are a metaphor for our emotions.

Any garden or backyard created in Australia is Australian with its own ethos, representing the hopes and ideals of its owners. Many creations will often try to link with the past, to create continuity and imply tradition. Also, gardens are often reflective of the larger world around us, a microcosm of our relationships with that world. This is equally true of the suburban picturesque where a controlled simulation of wildness, the mediation of nature for our purposes, evokes Romantic responses, or of the simple backyard with lawn, path, Hills Hoist, neat shrub beds with concrete edging, deck, barbecue and possibly swimming pool. Deborah Malor nicely transcribes these two as the true garden versus the adorned yard. We are conditioned to think of the true garden as a replica of nature, but perhaps tempered by the admonition in *Cold Comfort Farm* that 'Nature's all very well in her place, but she mustn't be allowed to make things untidy'.

In conclusion, it is worth considering the proposal of Luis Barragan, the renowned Mexican landscape architect, that, in view of the environmental and social upheavals of the twentieth century, it is the duty of every garden to offer a place of serenity. In giving this remark as a seminar discussion topic to students of the history of landscape architecture at the University of Canberra, one group thoughtfully suggested it was the duty of every garden to provide a place of experience. Need I say more?

K. Taylor

Ken Taylor is Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Canberra, and has written and lectured extensively on Australian cultural landscapes.

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The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history – horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

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A JOURNEY THROUGH BOOKS

by ROSS MCKINNON

One of my earliest recollections of gardening is of removing all of the flowering plants in my small garden when weeding and of replacing them in a completely new arrangement at the completion of the weeding!

My family, on both sides, have been keen gardeners for generations, so it just seemed naturally to follow that I would somehow indulge myself in the family passion. Most of the family were on the land, so a love of agriculture and growing plants seemed the right path to take and eventually led to a course of study in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens.

Long before my studies in horticulture, I discovered my grandmother's wonderful library filled with important books on every aspect of agriculture and horticulture spanning several hundred years with many titles in French and old English and all holding a tremendous fascination for a teenager. As my grandmother only lived next door, every rainy day saw me indulging in my passion of reading her ancient leather bound tomes. Opening her large glass-fronted bookcase doors and breathing in the aroma that can only come from old books is an experience that still gives me a deep and satisfying pleasure all these years later.

At the age of seven or eight, I can clearly remember my mother digging a small *Callistemon* seedling from one of our properties and bringing it home to suburban Adelaide where it thrived in our garden and I remember later a country relative coming to look at its progress. 'Why would you want to grow an old bush plant in your garden?' asked Auntie Clara to the astonishment of my mother. Even forty years ago, gardens were the exclusive domain of introduced exotic plants. No mere natives were planted.

My idyllic childhood was spent in a semi-rural outer Adelaide suburb and our farm menagerie included sheep, chooks and rabbits that regularly escaped, eating the roses and every luscious annual that we tried to plant in the garden. I am lucky or old enough to have been at the forefront of an awakening interest in native plants in Australia and can remember the very early days of the Society for Growing Australian Plants meeting in South Australia and which, as a student, I attended. I eagerly sought and still have collected the SGAP journals to this day both in my own collection and the Brisbane Botanic Gardens library.

Upon my grandmother's death, I inherited her extensive library. Newly married, my wife and I transported the entire lot across Australia in tea chests to Brisbane. I must say at the time I wondered why, and in the years since have had confirmed that there are very few private libraries in Brisbane, or indeed in Queensland. The reason is not hard to see, as the tropical and subtropical climates are certainly not con-

ducive to keeping old books. My bookcases must be airtight, packed with silica gel in an attempt to keep the air in the bookcases dry in our hot humid summers and equipped with every insect killing device. Age spotting does appear to be accelerating in the books and paintings and with all the due care that I take I find this rather terrifying as most of the books are over 150 years old with some over 300 years old.

A favourite title is a journal kept by my great-great-grandfather from the time of his arrival in South Australia in 1853. The journal faithfully records all of the families agricultural pursuits carried on at their first property, Eagle's Nest in the Adelaide Hills. Details of clearing, crop rotation, fruit tree production, early market receipts etc. in the journal are a wonderful reminder of a bygone era. Previous family members have indulged in all of the first editions of any agricultural or horticultural titles published in Australia. They didn't seem to have to relate specifically to the cool temperate climate of the Adelaide hills.

The Tropical Agriculturalist of 1833 is a good example as relevant today, living here in the subtropics, as when it was first printed. The *Florist and Pomologist*, with its early colour plates and line drawings, was an invaluable tool to the early colonial agriculturalists. A little later *Fruit Tree Pruning – a practical text for the fruit grower* by George Quinn, Department of Agriculture, South Australia, 1910, is an interesting essay on fruit tree pruning. Many of the practices are still held in high regard today.

Among the French titles, *Bon Jardinier*, a two volume set of the Gardener's Almanac 1864, gives an interesting insight into European horticulture in the middle of last century. At one stage, some of the family ran a private school in Tours, France. This explains the French connection and once again shows an obvious love of agriculture and horticulture by the books that the family purchased during that time.

There are all sorts of exotic titles, including *Improvisation* and *Useful Information*, along with titles on the diseases of horses and cattle with exquisite line drawings of fat and contented beasts.

With the explosion of interest in Australian native plants and more latterly, rainforest plants, I seem to have made significant additions to the original library with most of these invaluable reference books kept at work. The working part of my library is housed in my office at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens at suburban Mt Coot-tha, along with much plant memorabilia and ancient maps of the original Brisbane City Botanic Gardens.

The *Reader's Digest Complete Book of the Garden* was given to me by my parents when I started my horticultural studies in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens and has remained a faithful friend. One of the very first books that I purchased with my very meagre student allowance was *The Practical Home Gardener* by T.R.N. Lothian OBE, now retired as Director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden. Lothian's book still holds

As
writers
become
more
numerous,
it is
natural
for
readers
to become
more
indolent

treasured memories with every area of horticulture covered in a very extensive text – not like today's gardening books that are filled with beautiful photographs but little substance!

Dedicated book collectors will well remember the first edition of *Eucalyptus* by Stan Kelly, the incredibly talented engine driver with the Victorian railways who wrote this pioneer work. A gift from fellow students for my twenty-first birthday.

I am not embarrassed to say that for quick reference I use *What Flower is That?* by Stirling Macoboy, *What to Plant?* and *Encyclopaedia Botanica* by Frances Bodkin, and, of course, *A Dictionary of the Flowering Plants and Ferns* by J.C. Willis as a quick and ready reference to plant names for the hundreds of people each year who pass through the Botanic Gardens and expect an instant answer! *Tropica* and *Exotica* also play a quick reference role in visual plant identification.

Other favourites for native plant identification include the Elliott and Jones' ever increasing set of *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants* and more latterly the wonderful range of books being brought out on specific genera such as *The Grevillea Book* by Peter Olde and Neil Marriott.

Addicted to the local state floras, my favourites would undoubtedly be *Flora of South Australia* and *Queensland Flora* by F.M. Bailey. Indeed, the latter and complete set was kindly donated to my 'work' library by an elderly lady who called into the Botanic Gardens many years ago and said 'You look like a young man with a lifetime ahead of you in horticulture – I would like you to have these books so that I know that they will go to a good home where they will be appreciated!' A similar story can be told about *Tropical Planting and Gardening* by H.F. MacMillan with an elderly gentleman donating the book to my 'home' collection. MacMillan's is for tropical horticulture what Lothian's is for Mediterranean gardening. These books are now of great value and of course greatly treasured.

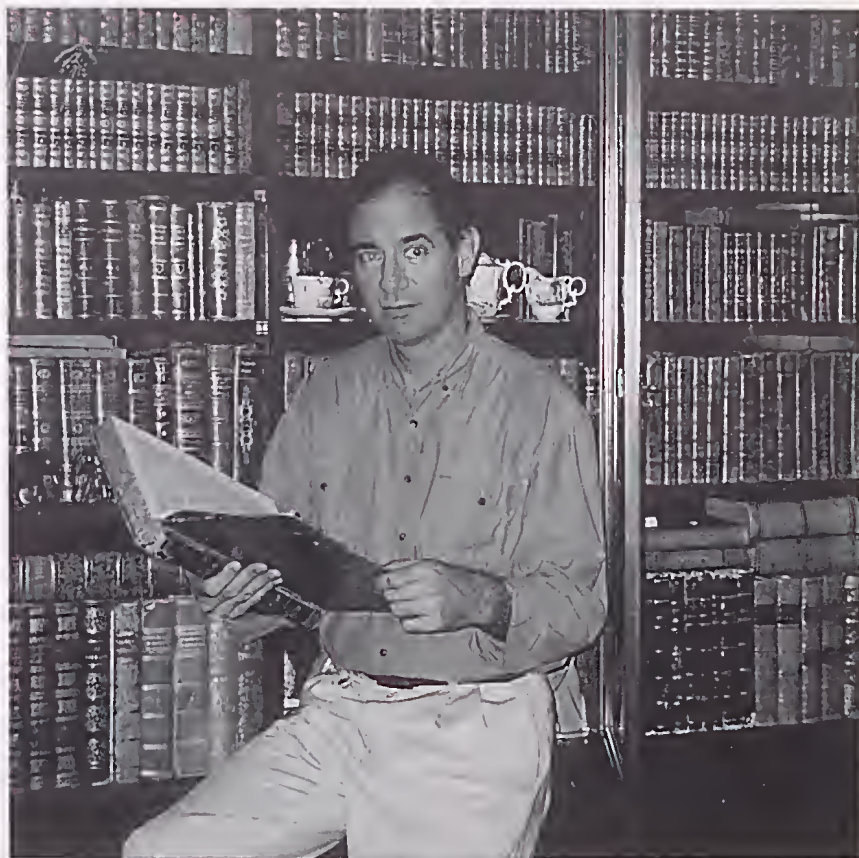
I was most fortunate to have studied plant identification for four years in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens under the famed lecturer Ron Hill, who co-authored with Ivan Holliday the many times reprinted *A Field Guide to Australian Trees*. To have a signed copy of this pioneering book is a most pleasant reminder of the students with whom I studied and of that great lecturer.

Other 'how to' books include each of Harry Oakman's books on tropical and subtropical gardening. Harry, now at the age of eighty-eight, has just published another title in his gardening series to compliment his best known *Tropical and Subtropical Gardening* which is almost the bible of northern Australian gardening.

Of course the classics still hold their place in my affections. The Royal Horticultural Society *Dictionary of Gardening*, a five volume set; proceedings of the Linnean Society and a number of century and older English horticultural

tomes all contribute to the fabric of my office library. The list of exciting titles is endless. Two more to add are the title of a wonderful New Zealand tome, *The Native Trees of New Zealand* by J.T. Salmon, given to me following a speaking engagement in the Auckland Botanic Gardens, and a complete set of *International Dendrology Society* yearbooks.

I will never be converted to the CD-ROM and computer as a way of reading for business and pleasure. You can't beat, in my estimation, the tactile sensation of handling a book, and I



Ross McKinnon in his 'home' library.

do so with all due reverence in the knowledge that many of the books that I own have been written by friends or acquaintances at very considerable personal cost. To think you are reading from a book that is older than the history of white people in Australia really gives me a buzz that will never be equated with tapping on a computer keyboard and viewing the results on a plastic screen!

Was it Goldsmith who said 'as writers become more numerous, it is natural for readers to become more indolent.' Well, roll on indolence!

Ross McKinnon is the Curator in charge of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens at suburban Mount Coot-tha. He is probably best known for his ABC television gardening series and as the regular northern presenter for *Burke's Backyard*. Ross writes regular gardening columns and appears on radio gardening programmes. He is also State Chairman and a National Director of Australia's Open Garden Scheme and is Patron, Life or Honorary member of 14 horticultural organisations. In 1993 he was awarded the inaugural Brisbane City Council Employee of the Year Award and in 1994 was nominated as a Fellow of the Linnean Society, London.

STRAWBERRY TREES: *ARBUTUS*

by ROBERT BODEN

Just south of Canberra in a beautiful old garden on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River is a magnificent specimen of the hybrid Strawberry Tree *Arbutus x andrachnoides*. It is believed to have been planted by Count Leopold Fane de Salis whose family first settled on the property called Cuppacumbalong in the middle of the 19th century.

The hybrid Strawberry Tree occurs naturally where the Irish Strawberry, *Arbutus unedo*, and the Greek strawberry, *A. andrachne* occur together in wooded thickets in parts of Greece. There it is reported to produce urn-shaped small white flowers in drooping clusters at the ends of the shoots over a long period between autumn and spring. These are followed by strawberry-like warty red berries.

In Australia, there seems to be considerable doubt about its flowering and fruiting, with James Hitchmough writing of a magnificent specimen in the Malmsbury Botanic Gardens ninety kms north-west of Melbourne, which is sterile. John Patrick refers to a fine specimen in the restored 19th century garden, Panmure in South Australia, but does not comment on flowers or fruit. A photograph of the hybrid in flower appears in an article on strawberry trees by Kevin Walsh in the 1987/88 number of the *Australian Garden Journal*. Fruiting on the specimen at Cuppacumbalong is reported to be 'negligible'. Maybe readers growing this hybrid could contribute their observations.

At a distance, the tree at Cuppacumbalong, which is over ten metres high with a widespread dense evergreen crown held low to the ground, is not outstanding. The surprise comes when you crawl under the branches and look up to the striking cinnamon red bark peeling in thin strips to reveal soft lime-green stems. It is particularly beautiful when caught in the late afternoon light.

The genus *Arbutus* includes 14 species of large evergreen shrubs or trees to 15 metres high with smooth red or silver-grey bark usually flaking in thin plates. Species occur naturally in western and central North America, Southern and Western Europe and Asia Minor. The distinguishing features are the extent of leaf serration, bark colour and texture and whether the flowers are held erect or pendulous. Several species have been in cultivation in Australia since last century.

The American species, Madrone, *Arbutus menziesii*, is named after Archibald Menzies, a Scottish naval surgeon and botanist who sailed with Vancouver on his voyage of north-west Pacific exploration in 1790-1795. *Menziesia*, a genus of low-growing shrubs, is also named after Menzies.

Madrone, sometimes called Pacific Madrone, occurs naturally in moist wooded slopes, in canyons in forests of oak and redwood, and on coastal rocky cliffs. It reaches heights of 20 metres and has leathery leaves up to 12 cm long beneath. Flowers are borne in upright clusters up to 15 cm long at the ends of shoots in late spring. The fruit is a rough orange-to-red berry about 1 metre across covered in small warts. Fruits are edible in small quantities and attract many

different bird species which distribute the seeds. The red-brown bark peels in papery flakes to reveal green stems.

Christopher Lloyd believes 'there never was a more ticklish shrub for resenting disturbance' than Madrone and recommends sowing seed in pots and planting straight to the final site without pricking off. The *Sunset Western Garden Book* 1979 also confirms the touchiness of Madrone, suggesting 'if you live in Madrone country and have a tree in your garden, treasure it. It is exacting in requirements in gardens outside its native area.'

Arbutus caucariensis, which also has the common Spanish name Madrono, grows to a height of 15 metres in the laurel and pine forests on



the islands of Tenerife La Palma, Gomera and Hierro. Flowers are also held erect and are green-white in colour, often tinted pink. Fruits are 2-3cm across and yellow-orange in colour. I have not found any records of this species growing in Australia and Kevin Walsh did not mention it in his article. On the other hand, he referred to a recent introduction of *A. glandulosa* with smooth pink-ochre bark and abundant flowers in autumn which appeared to have garden potential. It was then available only from Yamina Rare Plants and Dicksonia Rare Plants. It is not listed in the *New RHS Dictionary of Gardening* 1992 and it would be interesting to know if its early potential has been realised.

The Greek Strawberry Tree, *Arbutus andrachne*, which occurs throughout south-east Europe and south-west Asia has green tinged flowers borne in upright clusters in spring. These are followed by nearly smooth, rounded orange-red berries about 1cm across. The red-brown bark peels in thin strips to reveal bright orange-brown colours below.

By far the most common *Arbutus* in cultivation is the Irish Strawberry, *Arbutus unedo*, which has a very large natural distribution extending from the shores of Killarney (where it is known as *crann caitno*, *ubhla caitne* and *cuinche*) to the Mediterranean. It is a small tree or large rounded bush reaching a height of 13 metres. Young shoots are green or crimson with small serrated leaves about 8cm long, dark, glossy green above and bluish beneath. The variety *integrifolia* has wide smooth leaves, *quercifolia* has irregular serrated oak-like leaves and *salicifolia* has narrow willow-like leaves. In California there is one variety called 'Compacta' which is smaller than the species and another called 'Elfin King' which is even smaller and regarded as a fine container plant which flowers and fruits continuously. I have not been able to find 'Elfin King' in local nurseries and it would appear to be a useful introduction.

The small pitcher-shaped white flowers on Irish Strawberry resemble those of blueberry and reveal in their shape a family relationship with heather. Unlike Madrone and the Greek Strawberry Tree, the flowers of the Irish Strawberry are pendant, not upright. The fruits develop slowly so there are usually some of the previous year's crop ripening beside the current year's flowers if Currawongs and other birds have spared them.

James Hitchmough disparagingly describes the fruit as tasting 'like old carpet' (one wonders what type of diet James has which enables him to make such a comparison). Dr Louis Glowinski in his fabulous book, *Fruit Growing in Australia*, recommends waiting until the fruits are fully coloured or even until they have fallen from the tree before eating them. He suggests that fruits from some trees taste sweeter than others and my experience in leading groups through Commonwealth Park in Canberra, where there are several trees, confirms this. Maybe some enterprising horticulturist will select and vegetatively propagate the best types which would enhance Irish Strawberry's reputation for jam making and preserves.

The wood of the Irish Strawberry is reddish brown in colour, hard, close-grained and takes a good polish. It is liable to split in drying and is therefore used largely in small sizes for ornamental work and inlay. It is also suitable for pipes and musical instruments and many souvenirs sold in



*James Hitchmough disparagingly
describes the fruit as tasting like 'old
carpet'*

Killarney are made from Irish Strawberry.

Other ericaceous plants must be grown in acid soils but the Irish Strawberry tolerates lime and is hardy and pest- and disease-free under a wide range of growing conditions. It is grown widely in cooler parts of southern Australia and there are some fine old specimens planted in the grounds of Frensham School at Mittagong by the first Principal, Miss Winifred West, whose love of gardening is now evident in the gardens of many of her pupils. There are some beautiful examples of Irish Strawberry in old Canberra public and private gardens. It was tried as a hedge plant in Canberra by John Hobday who was Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in the late 1930s and early 40s when almost every front garden had a hedge established and maintained by the government.

Irish Strawberry shares a valuable survival mechanism with many eucalypts and some banksias as it develops woody swellings called lignotubers at ground level. These contain masses of buds which are stimulated to shoot if top growth is damaged or burnt. Fire is not a problem in Ireland and this adaptive characteristic is linked to the tree's Mediterranean origins.

The hybrid at Cuppacumbalong did not appear to have inherited this characteristic when it was inadvertently burnt some years ago. It continued to flourish despite a fire-scarred trunk and is now the source of cuttings for local propagation. Members attending the 1997 National Australian Garden History Conference who are interested in Strawberry Trees should try to see this tree while in Canberra.

Robert Boden trained initially as a forester and has spent many years working with Canberra's trees. He will be speaking about some of them at the 1997 National Conference in April. He has a Masters Degree from the University of Sydney and a doctorate from the Australian National University and was Director of the Australian National Botanic Gardens from 1979-89. Robert now practices as an environmental consultant. He is author of the book *Favourite Canberra Trees*.

by GEORGE SEDDON
Keynote address at the recent
17th Annual National Australian
Garden History Society Conference

INTRODUCTION

Nothing is so revealing of people's personality as the way in which they organise the spaces of their immediate environment. This is true of individuals and of whole societies. The most intimate spaces and the ones most under individual control are the house and garden; the study of gardens can tell us a great deal about cultural history. Decisions and choices about gardens are not made in a vacuum. They are culturally mediated. A multitude of forces is at work, including, in our own day, the influence of fashion, travel, reading – sometimes, perhaps, even the influence of conferences. At a deeper level there are also some concepts with a long history. One set of concepts is expressed in western cultures through a group of related words. The words are: Eden, Paradise, Arcadia, Utopia.

The relations between these words are complex and shifting. Most dictionaries, for example, give Eden and Paradise as synonymous, yet we all know that they are not interchangeable. They have a different etymology, different history, and a different range of application, even though the differences consist of subtle nuances. It seems appropriate to explore these differences a little, although necessarily in a superficial way, since they range across more than two thousand years of cultural history.

UTOPIA

Utopia is a good word to begin with because its origin is known with precision, and because it makes explicit a characteristic that in the others is usually implicit only. Utopia is a critique of the actual. The word was coined by Sir Thomas More in 1516 as the title for a book, conjoining two Greek words, *ou*=not; *topos*=place. Utopia is an imaginary island, depicted as enjoying a perfect social, legal and political system. Sir Thomas More's England shared with Utopia the fact of being an island, but the resemblance stopped there. He does not present his imaginary island as a practicable alternative, but as a way of highlighting the imperfections of the world around him and of strengthening the will to improve them. This form of social critique is widespread and pops up in some unexpected places. It is widely claimed today, for example, that Margaret Mead's well known anthropological works on Samoa and the Trobriand Islanders were much more a criticism of the narrowly puritanical United States in which she was brought up than they are about the real life behaviour of the people she purported to be studying.

The emphasis of Sir Thomas More's Utopia is on the social, legal and political system, as one might expect of the Chancellor of the realm, but he nevertheless goes into some detail about the gardens (and makes them sound remarkably like Australian suburbia, a point worth serious consideration).

'The stretes be twentie foote brode, On the backe side of

the honse through the whole length of the streete, lye large gardens inclosed round aboute wyth the backe part of the streetes. Every honse hathe two doores, one into the streete, and a posterne doore on the backsyde into the garden... They set great store by their gardeynes. In them they have vineyardes, all maner of fruite, herbes, and flowres, so pleasaunt, so well furnished, and so fynely kepte, that I never sawe thynge more frtrefull, nor better trimmed in anye place. Their studie and deligeunce herin commeth not onely of pleasure, but also of a certen strife and contention that is between strete and strete, concerning the trimming, bushanding, and furnishing of ther gardens: everye man for his owne parte. And verilye you shall not lightely finde in all the citie anye thinge, that is more commodious, eyther for the profite of the Citizens, or for pleasure. And therefore it maye seme that the first founder of the citie mynded nothing so much as these gardens'

Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, 1516,
translated from the Latin, 1556, p.90

Sir Thomas More's word 'Utopia' since 1516 has had shifts in meaning: one that is used in the planning literature is to make it the antonym of 'dystopia', the bad or dysfunctional place, compared with the 'the good place' – although strict etymology would require that to be spelt 'Eutopia' ('eu' meaning 'good' in Greek, of which More, a good classicist, was well aware, his title being a kind of pun, with two possible meanings). A much more familiar shift in meaning is that a 'utopian scheme' is now seen as impractical, the idle dream of the fanciful who know nothing about the real world, and in this sense the term is dismissive, even contemptuous. This shift, however, emphasises one further characteristic of all of the words with which I began: Utopia is *unattainable*. Attitudes to the unattainable then diverge. The unattainable can be seen either as a delusory will-o'-the-wisp, leading us astray, making us long for something we can't have – we would be better off without it, getting on with the realistically attainable. Or it can be seen as the energising dream that leads us on creatively to achieve far more than we could ever believe possible without it, even though the perfection always remains just beyond our grasp. This tension underlies a great deal of writing and thinking about garden design and practice.

Thus all utopias are a critique of our mundane surroundings. They set up unattainable goals – which can be seen either as inspiration or distracting folly (and I might add that every gardener I know is deeply ambivalent about these two attitudes, sharing now one, now the other). And from the first Utopia, Sir Thomas More's, we hear that there can be no ideal world without gardens, and even, perhaps, Best Kept Street and Tidy Town competitions.

EDEN AND PARADISE

'Eden' and 'Paradise' have a longer history, and they are not so much imaginary as mythical, although they can be understood quite literally by fundamentalist Christians and Muslims. Eden shares with Utopia the characteristic of being unattainable: it is a lost world, from which we have forever been shut out by the original sin of Adam and Eve. Paradise, in one of its uses, is an attainable reward, to those who are literal in their faith, for living virtuously. Curiously, however,

'Eden' seems to have a much more concrete reality than 'Paradise'. It has been notionally located as an actual site somewhere on the Anatolian Plateau, not without reason, given that most of our common fruits had their origin there. One recurring feature of imagined Edens is that there was always plenty to eat without much effort, and a range of fruit trees with an extended fruiting season covering much of the year seems to fill this need well. But it has also been used metaphorically of new found lands by Europeans, if they were seen as being fertile, without climatic extremes, and, as a rule, inhabited by men and women perceived as living with noble simplicity. Adam and Eve were naked, and Eden has always suggested an innocent sexuality – an element of Margaret Mead's Samoa of the Noble Savage, who was earlier identified in the European literary imagination with the American Indian (although not, alas, in European behaviour). This search for primitive nobility and innocent sexuality in the naked or semi-naked savage is not restricted to the Christian myth of Eden: it is fully developed in Tacitus, for example, expressed in his *Germania*, in which the forest dwellers to the north of the Alps were seen as having all the primitive virtues that had once supposedly characterised the Romans, but had been lost in a society that was urban, corrupt, autocratic, licentious, luxurious, effete (see Schama, 1995). The longing for an innocent sexuality is expressed so powerfully and so often in images of the garden that it might be interpreted as a dream of sex not only without guilt but also without consequences, a privilege that some of our generation thought they enjoyed for several decades, post-pill and pre-AIDS.

In Paradise, the sexuality was not always quite so innocent as it is portrayed in, for example, the almost puritanically innocent Adam and Eve portrayed in the sculptures and paintings of mediaeval Germany. Paradise might offer a more abundant sensuality, more like the guiltless but very active sexuality portrayed by Margaret Mead. The Muslim Paradise was (is?) conveniently furnished with houris, voluptuously beautiful nymphs with eyes like gazelles (that is the Arabic and Persian derivation of the word). This, it is apparent, is a male-oriented concept of the delights of Paradise: sexual equality would presumably require that there be a plentiful supply of graceful and virile young men at hand to pleasure the ladies who had made it to Paradise, but the Muslim concept is reticent on this point. The idea of a rich sensuality inevitably degenerates into license and sexual ambiguity in some versions of this theme. The Forest of Arden was the site of imagined indulgences of many kinds, including a loosening of the gender roles ('If you come into the woods today, you're in for a BIG SURPRISE').

The loosening of defined roles relates not only to gender, but to social hierarchy, another recurrent theme that has been expressed in a variety of ways through time.

*When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?*

is an assertion of the rights of man, but the democratic ideal was located by Tacitus in the Hercynian forests of Germany. Shakespeare inverts the social order – for a time – in the Forest of Arden, and Robin Hood in the greenwood, both part of a long tradition. The 'garden' in its various manifestations is usually (but not always) seen as a place in which



Old Gowrie, Toowoomba, Queensland

distinctions of rank are laid aside. This carries through to the present in very minor but recognisable forms. There is, for example, a freemasonry of gardeners. 'Real gardeners' recognise each other and accept each other at once as equals, whether they be Dame Elizabeth Murdoch, Lady Law-Smith, or Jack's Jill. The Open Garden Scheme in Australia could not work without this recognition that gardens are for gardeners, and thus for sharing among equals.

Of course the dictionaries are correct in listing 'Eden' and 'Paradise' as synonyms, and the different nuances that attach to them are never used consistently. As well as differing in tense, however, they differ etymologically. 'Eden' has a Hebraic origin, associated with the word meaning 'delight' – hence the garden of earthly delights. Whether as part of the biblical story, Christian and Jewish, or as an ancestral memory of favoured valleys in Asia Minor, 'Eden' is earthly. The OED gives its primary and secondary meanings as 1. The first abode of Adam and Eve, Paradise, and 2. *transf.* and *fig.* A delightful abode, a paradise. Both end up as 'Paradise', but Paradise has a much longer definition, and range of applications. Its origins are also Middle Eastern, but in this case Avestic (Old Persian), with the original meaning of a large park. Its first recorded use in Greek is by the historian Xenophon, who used it to describe the parks of Persian kings and nobles. These were usually hunting parks, so they were extensive, and they contained wild animals, and this persisted as one of the later meanings as 'an oriental pleasure ground, *esp.* one enclosing wild beasts for the chase. *b.* Hence an English park in which foreign animals are kept. 1613' When it is used synonymously with 'Eden' it refers to the *earthly* paradise, whereas the *heavenly* paradise is the abode of the blessed, either Christian, Jewish or Muslim.

The difference in origins is reflected in the metaphorical application to gardens: the walled garden, full of flowers, fragrance and sweet ease is an Eden derivative, whereas the English estates improved by Capability Brown and Humphry Repton in the 18th century are paradisiacal, offspring of the Persian hunting park, although the wild animals were usually restricted to deer, which were self-pro-

pelled lawn-mowers. These estates in England were the product of a pastoral economy: they are based on grazing rather than digging and delving – agriculture – and thus can also be seen as reflecting through the ages, to our own day, two approaches to ‘the garden’ (using the word in the broad sense). One is actively interventionist, turning the sod, pruning, weeding, maintaining; a branch of agriculture. The garden space is enclosed, and animals, other than a dog or cat, are excluded. Animals are inimical to intensive agriculture. The other is more extensive and more expansive, less obviously bounded, relying for its pleasures on mature trees, groves of them where possible, grassy clearings (which we now call ‘lawns’), with an understorey of shrubs in the woods and at their margins, but no defined planting beds: in short, a pastoral system rather than an agricultural one, in which it grades imperceptibly into the ‘Arcadian’, my fourth word, and still to come. The persistence of lawns into contemporary suburban gardens in Australia is a very clear indication of the extent to which garden design is mediated through cultural history. Australia was settled at a time when the dominant social group in Britain was nurtured by a pastoral economy. The lawn is an Arcadian remnant.

This distinction between Eden and Paradise is neither clear-cut nor consistent. The nuances shift and change. The Eden of the Book of Genesis was not agricultural (the delving followed the Fall), but it was certainly not a hunting economy, and graphic representations show the lion lying down with the lamb. The dietary regime at the Horeb Eden is not specified in detail: Eve certainly did not spend the day over a hot stove, so elaborate food preparation is out. One gets the impression that wild honey, milk (possibly) and lots of fruit, apples excepted, were the staples. In other words, close to the diet of the frugiverous primates of the great apes to this day. Is Eden a memory? It is possible to see the Fall as the beginning of agriculture, with its life of backbreaking toil, not so much a milestone of evolutionary progress but a consequence of increasing density of population. Anthropologists have used the phrase ‘primitive affluence’ of hunter-gatherer societies, and it has been argued that the Aborigines in Australia in the 18th century had a more nutritious and more varied diet, acquired with substantially less expenditure of effort, than their European counterpart. Perhaps we can see the gatherers in Eden and the hunters and herders in the Paradise myth, representing two strains of a pre-agrarian society.

Nevertheless, the Eden derivatives among our gardens do require intensive labour, and this is precisely because of the Fall. We can recreate imagined Edens, gardens of earthly delights, but their cost is unending hard work – pleasurable, perhaps, but work.

ARCADIA

Arcadia or Arcady overlaps considerably in meaning with ‘Paradise’, but it is a product of the Greek and Roman cultures, not the Middle Eastern. It was supposedly drawn from a real place in the Peloponnese, one favoured by nature. In both cultures, it was imagined as a wooded rocky place, the haunt of satyrs, the realm of Pan with his sweetly haunting pipes. It is the *myth* of a pastoral economy, idealised by city dwellers, and to that extent, it can be read as escapist fantasy.

The Theocritean poetry of shepherds, shepherdesses and their innocently amorous pursuits were in part a product of urban overcrowding, first in Greek Alexandria, later in Rome. It had a febrile revival at the French court, where there were eager swains aplenty ready and willing to pursue their reluctant loves through the woods. In England, an Arcadian-Paradisiacal ideal became the basis of landscape design, as we have seen. Because of the enclosures and the switch from agriculture to a pastoral economy on the large estates in the 18th century, a productive grazing estate could also be conceived as a *landscape* of shady groves and open meadows, and the ‘garden’ or park was a semi-natural, productive world of Nature Refined of her Coarser Attributes. An apparently natural harmony between man and his setting is central to the Arcadian ideal, and it can be illustrated well in many of the older rural estates in the better-watered and more fertile parts of Australia, which were receptive to the Arcadian imagination, since they are all part of the pastoral economy. The influence of the Arcadian dream is strikingly apparent in Australia from the self-image that so many graziers evince through the names they gave their land: ‘Groves’ and ‘Vales’ are fairly common, both Arcadian, but the key word is ‘Park’: ‘Sefton Park’, ‘Camberley Park’, ‘Alton Park’. How many ‘Parks’ do you know in your neighbourhood? They are not, of course, parks – they are sheep farms or cattle farms. A park is devoted to leisure pursuits, not to earning a living. It is only by invoking the Arcadian dream that the two can be yoked satisfactorily.

A good example of an Arcadian landscape ‘on the ground’ is the driveway and broad setting of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch’s ‘Cruden Farm’ at Langwarrin, on the outskirts of Melbourne, and one could use three of the words we have been discussing to name its parts. There is a walled garden that is a ‘garden of earthly delights’, which is to say, ‘Eden’, sheltered, bound, fragrant, full of flowers – but because of that apple-eating, requiring a great deal of hard work. Around the house there is a more open garden with grassy walks, shrubberies and many fine trees, more Paradise than Eden; this runs out to a working farm, with a gentle transition. But the ‘farm’, which is pasture and shade trees, is carefully groomed. The curving driveway itself is of gravel, not bitumen, which maintains the rustic feeling, but increases the maintenance. Beside the avenue of trees, there is a split-rail fence, and beyond that, the blonde pastures of summer. Intensely Australian, naturalistic, but the effects are highly contrived, without any appearance of contrivance.

THE CRITICAL USE OF TERMS

If we define each of my four terms carefully, and use them precisely and consistently, can they then have a more rigorous employment in the analysis of garden history? The answer is, alas, no. They will always shift and change. ‘Eden’, ‘Paradise’ and ‘Arcadia’ will continue to be used interchangeably on many occasions, and all are used with a Utopian context, in the sense of being ideals. The point of considering them at all is to gain insight into the complexities of cultural history. Nevertheless, they can throw some light on design questions: for example, an Arcadian landscape should keep a rustic feeling; natural materials like wood or

stone, for example, would be more appropriate than patently artificial ones like concrete for benches or bridges.

Edward Hyams gave a new impetus to the term 'Paradise garden' (Hyams, 1964), and illustrates his understanding of the term by a part of the exotically romantic garden at Bodnant in North Wales. In it 'The Dell':

'is a small river valley with trees, shrubs and ground plants such as are common enough in mountain and moorland country... But it is not "natural", only "after" nature, for it has been made over with exotic plant material, with trees and shrubs and groundlings from the Himalaya, the Andes, the Alps...' The spirit of the Douanier Rousseau is evoked by the paradise garden. 'There are no tigers, but the scene suggests that at any moment one will appear and that when he does he will be tame and friendly, as is fitting in a paradise.' The Dell at Bodnant has no tigers, but it has just about everything else, including what is probably the richest collection of rhododendrons in the world.

This great garden owes its success to care at every level: some of the conditions of success are worth remarking here. The dank Welsh valley through which runs the Hiraethlyn River, much as it has always done, is not very different from the conditions under which these plants originally grew. So although widely dissimilar in geographic origin, they are all very similar in their ecological requirements. This shows in two ways. First, that once established, they can pretty much be left to look after themselves, to grow 'naturally'. There is little artificial watering, for instance. The second is that the form and appearance of the plants will show evolutionary adaptation to similar conditions, so that they harmonise readily. Thus, this is a 'naturalistic' garden, although there is nothing like it in nature. There is a wealth of colour in the garden, but there are no garish contrasts; all the colours are of pastel hue, they are seen in a woodland setting with a great deal of sombre green background (this is usually missing in Australian gardens), and they are seen under what the English call a 'soft' light, ie. it is usually raining. Finally, this garden is naturally enclosed by its valley, so there is no problem of transition.

A more extreme example is described in *Adventures of a Gardener* by Peter Smithers (Smithers 1995). He established a garden in the Italian Lakes region on a slope facing south to the Lago di Lugano, and established a high canopy with deciduous magnolias, with an understorey of camellias, rhododendrons, lilies, and so on. With plenty of sun, moisture, and a good soil the garden soon matured. Although it puts on a stunning floral display for much of the year, Smithers describes his garden as an 'ecosystem'. It was designed to be so, and his key chapter has the title 'In Which the Plants Do Most of the Work'; he claims that 'It no longer needs my daily care. A small adjustment here and there from time to time to facilitate passage...' (p.73). Here, it seems, is Paradise Regained, through studying natural systems – his plants, although exotic, are growing in conditions like those they come from. Yet if we read the fine print, it becomes clear that if the plants do most of the work, they do not quite do all of it. Unwanted seedlings of *Robinia* (such an invasive weed species in Italy), palms etc. – are constantly kept in check. Half a dozen wisteria are pruned



RICHARD STRINGER

Jimbour House near Dalby is one of the most important historic sites in Queensland.

annually. Lilies are moved, planting mistakes are remedied – and there is a small staff of gardeners. For it is still a garden. Nevertheless, such accounts are worth study. When we try to copy such gardens in Australia, we generally try to mimic the results, whereas we should be studying the principles, which aim to create a near-natural ecosystem (which in most of our climates and soils would not lead to the use of plants from the lower slopes of the Himalayas, unless you live half-way up Mt Wellington outside Hobart).

PARADISE TRANSLATED

The European imagination has often located Paradise in the New World. The French have been specially fertile – Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Noble Savage, Gauguin and his languorous Paradise in the South Seas, the 'Paysages Exotiques' series of the Parisian painter, Henri Rousseau, the customs officer who had never travelled, but worked from the Jardin des Plantes, the Botanical Gardens in Paris. His paintings pick up several of the themes noted already. It seems always to be spring. The colours are bright and clear. Apes play happily with golden fruits.

A French fantasy of especial interest to Australians is an account, published in Paris in 1693, of a voyage to La Terre Australe by Jacques Sadeur, a narrator as fictional as the voyage, the real author being Gabriel de Foigny (there are said to be only seven known original copies of this work – we have one in the Reid Library at the University of Western Australia). The book contains 'les coutumes et les moeurs des Australiens' – our customs, our studies, the special animals of the country and so on. There are only four large animals, and none of them dangerous, there are no venomous serpents, there are no troublesome insects, and in particular, specially mentioned, there are no flies. There is a magnificent range of mountains along the south coast, much higher than the Pyrenees, and some broad rivers. It snows

occasionally in the South, but not much, and people go around without clothes all the year, since it is never either excessively hot nor excessively cold. We live on fruit that ripens the year round. Our houses have exquisite floors of polished jasper, beautifully veined. We are brave warriors, but generally peaceful. Everyone seems to love everyone else, but no one person in particular, and it is not clear how children come into being, since it is a crime to discuss the procreative act. Men as well as women are able to suckle infants, so gender roles are blurred. And the countryside everywhere is a garden. A young Italian-Australian painter, Julia Ciccarone, has recently exhibited paintings at Heide Gallery in Melbourne illustrating these imagined scenes.

The English were more pragmatic: to describe a new land as 'like a garden' or 'a second Eden' was generally a prelude to occupation. 'The country was a Paradise' said Thomas Arnold of New Zealand. One early-1800s English traveller to Australia was impressed enough by what he saw being achieved here in New South Wales 'even under the worst auspices, and in a country filled with the dregs of our own'. How much more then, must New Zealand flourish, which is itself a beautiful garden and capable of being rendered the most delightful spot on earth.'

The sting is in the tail. If the place is already a beautiful garden, where the soil is so fertile that it provides readily for all the necessities of life, then what further 'rendering' is required? The answer is that part of taking possession is to put your own stamp on the land. Very often this has meant the wiping out of the qualities that made the place so attractive in the first place, and trying to reproduce the landscapes and gardens you left behind. Thus the garden in the New Worlds, the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, can be seen as one of the tools of imperial power; it remains one of its symbols and the slowest to loosen its hold.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

John of Gaunt called his England 'this other Eden, demi-Paradise' a sentiment of the kind most often heard in times of war, when patriotic fervour runs strong. But it also expresses a mood of acceptance and celebration. Eden is here. Embrace the actual – or in language less elegant than Shakespeare's, but still pungent: 'This is as good as it gets', says Paul Keating. In the world of the garden, we should grow up, and abandon futile dreams.

This mood is strong in Australia today, and the change has been very apparent in the two major garden conferences held in Melbourne in 1989 and 1996. The first conference was dominated by the English telling us what good gardens are really like – Penelope Hobhouse, Beth Chatto, John Brookes, Christopher Lloyd. They are all outstanding gardeners, but from a world that is very different from ours. At the second conference, in my opinion and that of many others, the Australian speakers had far more to offer: they had better understood the need for ecologically responsible gardening, and there were outstanding talks on wise water use, on the garden as bird habitat (by Graham Pizzey), on the dangers of garden escapes to natural bushland (by Judith Rawlings), and so on.

So we should abandon the dreams – and there is more than one. The Utopian dream of Gabriel de Foigny and his

imagined voyager Jacques Sadeur gives way to the reality: there *are* flies, venomous serpents, destructive insects of all kinds. The English imperial dream is also dispensable, the dream of conquest and transformation. We do not need to achieve social standing by recreating Knole or Bodnant in hot and dry Australia. Macedon, Bowral, the Adelaide Hills, and – dare I say it – Toowoomba, are not the only places in Australia where it is possible to have fine gardens, although the gardening literature would lead us to think so. They are regularly described as having climates 'favourable to gardening', which means, of course, slightly more amenable to pursuing generally inappropriate goals than the rest of the country.

Nevertheless, the ambiguities remain. No matter how much we dedicate ourselves to ecologically responsible gardening, gardens do not look after themselves, and we cannot leave it to nature. The better that introduced plants are adapted to local conditions, the more likely they are to become dangerous garden escapes. The Australian environment everywhere is already a disturbed environment. Weed invasion is unending. If we aim for a garden that is productive as well as decorative, problems multiply. Where I live, in Fremantle, the olive and the mulberry look after themselves, and fruit generously. Lemons need some fertiliser and summer water, but are pretty tough. Figs, however, need constant baiting. They fruit prolifically, but are full of fruit fly. And so it goes. Moreover we demand a higher level of comfort and design in our immediate environment that the natural environment generally offers.

If the European imagination has often idealised the tropics as a place of warmth and leisure where the flowers always bloom and the ripe fruits drop effortlessly into your lap, those who live and garden in the tropics know a different world – one where plants grow rapidly, but also senesce and decay rapidly, where weeds grow rapidly, rampantly, where there are no cold winters to kill off predatory insects, where humid air encourages the growth of fungus, mould, scale, virus, black spot..., where the organic content of the soil oxidises rapidly and where heavy rain leaches the soil of nutrients, where the heat of the tropical sun is such that even a few days without that rain can constitute a drought.

We can and should redefine our concept of Eden, Paradise, Arcadia using local idioms and in ways that reflect more of the actual. But however we define them, we shall continue to strive for them, they will continue to elude our grasp, and we will profit from the striving. 'A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at.'

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THE BOTANICAL ART OF MARGARET STONES



*An exact
interpretation
can be very deadly
... and
an arty thing
can be a very
silly thing*

Margaret Stones was born in Colac in 1920 and studied at the Swinburne Technical College and the National Gallery of Victoria before the war interrupted her artistic pursuits. As part of the war effort, Margaret Stones began nursing at the Epworth Hospital, Richmond. It was not until she was hospitalised with tuberculosis in 1945 that she took to drawing Australian wildflowers brought to her by friends.

Her drawings soon caught the attention of her physician who alerted his friend, Daryl Lindsay, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria. Lindsay encouraged Margaret Stones to continue drawing and in 1946 purchased a work for the Gallery's collection from her first exhibition.

Her earliest work in the field dates from the late 1940s when she joined Melbourne University's Botany Department on expeditions to Victoria's Bogong High Plains. Upon viewing her works from this time, Melbourne industrialist and art patron Russell Grimwade commissioned a series of drawings of native wildflowers, becoming the artist's first patron. Buoyed by success, Margaret Stones was further encouraged by Professor John Turner, of the University's School of Botany, to illustrate plant specimens.

Wishing to broaden her experience and botanical knowledge, Stones saved enough money for a one-way ticket to London and left Australia in 1951 to further her international reputation. She headed straight for the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew – a Mecca for all botanical artists. Having found lodgings in nearby Kew Gardens, she has been calling it home ever since.

A year after arriving in London, she had the first of several solo exhibitions at P & D Colnaghi, one of London's most important prints and drawings dealers.

From 1958 until 1983, Margaret Stones was the princi-

*Margaret Stones drawing on
the Bogong High Plains,
Victoria, 1948-49.
Photographer unknown.
Reproduced by permission of
the National Gallery of
Victoria, Melbourne.*

*Front cover illustration by
Margaret Stones.*

pal contributing artist to *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* (founded in 1787 in response to public demand for information on new plants being discovered by British maritime exploration), producing more than four-hundred water-colour drawings.

In 1957 Margaret Stones was the first woman to be commissioned by the Post Master General's Department in Canberra (now Australia Post) to prepare a set of floral designs for Australian stamps.

Four years later, she was asked by the late Lord Talbot de Malahide to produce drawings of the endemic flora of Tasmania. This project developed into a major publishing project comprising six large volumes – described as one of the most important botanical publications in the 20th century.

Another significant highlight of Stone's remarkable career is her appointment by the Louisiana State University in 1975 to illustrate the state's spectacular flora. Also important is her 1993 commission from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, for a group of flowers associated with its founder Thomas Jefferson (and former President of the United States of America), to commemorate the 250th anniversary of his birth.

Two exhibitions in Melbourne over the past six months have brought Margaret Stones' fine illustrations to the public eye. The National Gallery of Victoria holds one collection and has for sale a catalogue from their recent exhibition. The University of Melbourne also hold over forty drawings and watercolours in its collection.

THE AUSTRALIAN BACKYARD

by DEBORAH MALOR



The backyard is clearly opposed to the front garden in most peoples' notion of the arrangement of the spaces around the house. It seems so obvious...but this simple spatial division masks considerable cultural complexity. Paul Groth has set up what he calls a 'hierarchy of care' in attempting to understand what defines the spaces described by the American terms 'lot', 'yard', and 'garden'.¹ Adapting Groth's work to local conditions, I suggest that in Australia we have gardens, back gardens, backyard gardens, and backyards. We have front yards too – but not usually described as such, as they commonly remain undifferentiated from gardens.

In this hierarchy of care, gardens and back gardens automatically require the person and the spade, or the person observing the scene, because gardens are, to quote Groth, 'planted or decorated places to be appreciated in their own right...largely defined by the specialness of (their) contents, not necessarily by (their) edges'.² On the other hand the term 'yard', as in 'backyard', is traditionally related to enclosure: a yard is created as holding place, rather than being created simply for itself, as with a garden.³ A backyard is defined by its edges, its neighbouring spaces, its access to utilities. This definition is tied to how certain arte-

facts are placed and used in the space behind the house: even lawns and shrubs bordering a backyard constitute not a garden but simply protective adornment of that space.⁴

'To garden' is a popularly-used verb but, following Groth's line, 'the places where one does such activity are rarely *gardens*'.⁵ There are really only two occasions where one can find a 'true' garden in Australia: in large and special areas, particularly for vegetables, usually within a backyard (a backyard garden); or where the plantings and artefacts are moved out from the lot lines, and away from the house walls, to create an autonomous design.

Although back gardens are often backyards under a more genteel name they are also sometimes gardens that have defined spatial containment and spread behind the house, confronting conventional housing design that functions on preconceived notions of what is private and what is utility. To see the difference between a true garden and an adorned yard is to see the difference between the care taken in using a refined geometry as a garden aesthetic, and just

Cover, Australia Post Stamp Pack; Christmas 1992.
Illust. Craig Smith;
Design Dianne Cook.

Right: Rozelle 1994. Hills Hoist, pots.



DEBORAH MALOR

making sure that everything lines up with, and thus clings to, the fence lines. A central, dominant geometry creates gardens of great beauty, such as that at Eryldene, Gordon. With its eucalypts, camellias and oriental pavilion Eryldene's rear garden is horticultural East-West cuisine. But, if you lean over the side fence of Eryldene, behind the potting shed on the western boundary, you will see that the spaces behind the neighbouring houses are edged by shrubs, subdivided by concrete, and decorated with Hills Hoists. They are clearly backyards, vernacular spaces which hold a special place in Australian popular memory and our everyday lives.

The space of the backyard is continually defined by the use imposed on the artefacts it holds. Local government dictates are often based on antiquated ideas regarding provision of services and the modesty of the local population. Whereas it is not considered 'nice' to have a Hills Hoist out the front in full view of the street, even if that is the best drying spot on the lot, it is clearly quite all right to have the same hoist visible from the street if it is nominally in a 'back' yard. The meaning of backyard has been arrived at through the experience and creation of a vernacular landscape.

The laying of the ideas of garden and leisure over a utilitarian space has led us to having a greater range of backyard usage than in previous centuries, and a greater diversity of

treatments of the space. Some idea of the implications of the collision of social change and expectation in the area of the backyard can be gained by comparing its immediate post war situation with that of today.⁶

In 1958 Ernest Lord advised his readers, the house-building parents of baby-boomers, that there were strict guidelines for success in planning one's garden (front and back, please note), beginning with – first place your clothes hoist.⁷ Then, in order, establish the vegetable plot, driveway, fruit trees, play area for children, compost heap, seed beds, glass frames and finally, flower beds and shrubbery. The program is quite practical, given the lifestyle of the period but, for the backyard, it set a pattern that has been almost impossible to break. Backyard utility was enshrined as unchanging, by the formal placement of those artefacts required to support other, more decorative or pleasurable, aspects of life.

Only by adding to the catalogue of 'utilitarian' artefacts has the form of the backyard slowly evolved whilst the decorative and the pleasurable have been constantly and rapidly replaced – evidence of our consumerist society. The visual character of the backyard has thus changed, although many of its artefacts are still recognisable. The revival of the garden room has recreated the microclimate once found in the enthusiast's greenhouse. The local garden centre or supermarket acts, de facto, as forcing ground, providing fool-proof bloomers and mini-pots, doing away with the need for frames and seed beds. The vegie patch is still a 'goer', although now it may consist of 'designer' or miniature vegetables grown in pots, evidence of the cult of cuisine. Interestingly, the continued desire to prune, edge and mow, combined with a growing eco-consciousness and rising garbage disposal costs, has formalised the compost heap as a design statement.

The opening up of the house has changed the way people use the backyard, and how they entertain: the backyard is now seen by people who, in the 50s, would not have made it past the front room. As the kitchen has been pushed back into the house, the barbecue has evolved from a steel plate set on bricks to be as complicated and streamlined as the latest European appliance. You may now have the Sunday roast in the backyard... should you want to.

The laundry, rather than hanging off the 50s back porch, is also internal, often incorporating a clothes dryer to supplement or replace the traditional line. The porch has become a terrace (under some sort of 'vergola' roof or, more extravagantly, the modern reading of a conservatory) extending from wide doors off the family room and informal eating area, the latter, in effect, part of the backyard itself. Out in the open spaces the service areas – the folding clothes hoist or wall-mounted line, garden shed, bin storage – are rapidly being separated off from the entertainment area or are themselves a moveable feast, so to speak. The portability of much modern leisure overlays the rigid form of earlier utility.

The backyard has always been a space at the service of the family. Its contents, in the 1990s, are directed to at least giving the impression of family leisure, although Hugh Mackay has commented that when you could at last afford the pool, the children had left home.⁸ Leisure products for

children are a growth industry, artefacts turning the backyard into a small pleasure park.

To recap, it is by artefacts and their functions that we can further define the Australian backyard that is already characterised by its edges. For a country with an almost

*A backyard is not about garden style
but about lifestyle*

aggressive Anglo picturing of our garden tradition, some of these artefacts may surprise: Hills Hoist, loo down the back, vegie patch, chook house, concrete, lawn, shed, garage, paths, 'barbecue settings', choko vine and lemon tree are 'Australian' enough, but we could also include shrines, bread ovens, murals, grape vines, wine-cask-bladder scarecrows for fig trees, raised beds, and cactus. Historically the lemon tree and the choko vine over the chook run are so iconic of the Australian backyard that they are easily seen as artefacts rather than plants: perhaps we should now include murraya, jasmine, and other edge-clinging greenery.

Pets, also, can be thought of as artefacts. In the days before health regulations ruled out the keeping of laying hens, and noise regulations did away with the rooster, backyard animals tended towards the utilitarian. Cats still recognised mice as dinner and birds as defilers of washing, dogs protected as well as any security alarm and proved useful outfielders in backyard cricket. Now dogs are reduced to barking in frustration at the city cacophony and, along with designer cats, are part of a lifestyle image. As artefacts, the yard-bound pet and the potted topiaried cumquat hold similar status, as living things which are shaped by our desire to control 'nature' and our need for unconditional response.⁹

But for all the accoutrements, decorative materials and gadgetry available, and the truckloads of advice on design of leisure areas, backyards have not broken away from the edges of the lot, as Groth has pointed out. With its concrete backbone going back to clothes prop days, the structure of the Australian backyard remains the same. Only the presentation of artefacts has changed, the superficiality of style alone signalling the move from no-frills function to manicured leisure centre.

We are told – through the media, advertising and through social custom – how to act and even how to look in our own backyards. A backyard is not about garden style but about lifestyle. The style of one's life, as it is manifested in a particular defined space such as a backyard, both reflects and impacts on that space. What is important for the Australian backyard is that this space has essentially developed in a period when people have had more choice than ever before as to how they live.

To define the style of the Australian backyard requires us to stand back and consider whether the iconic backyard of clothes line, lemon tree and concrete path has ever really existed or whether it is a space that we have furnished in our imaginations with all the icons we have encountered.

Historically, the moment when the average suburban house had a Hills Hoist, and a backyard loo as the only toilet, is a very small window in the structure of the European presence in Australia.

Although we list artefacts, draw plans, photograph, create bibliographies, and record oral histories, the essence of the Australian backyard proves elusive – it is like defining what you mean by home. However, the more conscious we are of what we do in that space, how it fits into the pattern of our lives, the more we will see how, historically, a particular version of the backyard has quickly become ours in the relatively short time since first settlement. The continuing task of landscape and garden historians should be to question and assess what we have already produced, what we have now, rather than seeing the institution of the latest design trend or whizzbangery from elsewhere as all important. We have to distinguish between the artefact and the action associated with it. We should attempt to retain the utility of the space whilst recognising that our needs may have changed.

The structures which support our lifestyle carry, embedded, the deeper indications of our beliefs. That is why the backyard, as a vernacular space, carries with it so many 'icons' of our culture, why it may be more easily identified as 'Australian' than almost any garden – by its artefacts and edges.

Deborah Malor is a researcher and writer whose doctoral thesis, *Dreamsites: Yards and Gardens of Suburban Sydney*, is presently under examination. Despite years researching the landscape and its history, the tiny backyard she enjoys with her husband is a response to whim rather than any design regime, a relaxed disorder providing a Club Med for visiting birds.

NOTES

This article is extracted from 'The Australian backyard', a paper presented at *From Grand Allée to Backyard Barbie: Australian Garden Style*, Winter Seminar of the AGHS (ACT, Monaro, & Riverina Branch), Canberra, July 1996

- 1 The use of the term 'lor', whilst it appears an Americanism, avoids the confusion between a house 'block' and a street 'block'.
- 2 Paul Groth, 'Parking gardens', in Mark Francis and Randolph Hester, Jr, eds, *The Meaning of Gardens*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990, 136
- 3 Paul Groth, 'Lot, yard, and garden: American distinctions', *Landscape* 30:3, 1990, 30; Groth, 'Parking gardens', 131
- 4 'Artefacts' bestows archaeological importance on the taken-for-granted 'things' – clothes lines, barbecues, tables and chairs, even plants – that sit in our backyards.
- 5 Groth, 'Lot, yard, and garden...', 34
- 6 The myth of the Australian backyard is largely the preserve of the postwar baby boomer generation and their parents; it is the baby boomers' children and grandchildren who instigate further change.
- 7 Ernest E. Lord, *Your New Home Garden: Its design, Construction and Planting*, Melbourne: Lothian, 1958, paraphrased from Anne Latreille, 'Behind the front fence: gardens and gardening', in Judith O'Callaghan, ed., *The Australian Dream: Design of the Fifties*, Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, 1993, 137
- 8 Hugh Mackay, *The Mackay Report: Australians at Home*, Bathurst: Mackay Research, July 1986, 13
- 9 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984

TOWARDS AN AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE STYLE

by TREVOR NOTTLE

Whatever the arguments that may be put for or against the development of a landscape style that is somehow Australian, it is my feeling that most of us are still busy exploring the palette of plants that may yet contribute that touch of distinction to our garden making. Until very recently most of us have been satisfied to consider plants purely on their floral merits and with scant regard for their capacity to survive in our climatic range. Now that we are beginning to understand the need to consider the heat hardiness and drought tolerance of the plants we choose for our gardens there may be a chance that a style of gardening develops which reflects our lifestyle and that is responsive to our environment – whichever part of Australia we live in. But as I have already said, I think most of us have a lot more exploring to do before we come to thinking much about how the plants at our disposal can be put together in a more distinctive style.

This northern spring has seen a rash of new books which add even more plants that have potential for our gardens once we have explored what their uses may be, and how they may (or may not) grow for us.

Old roses have a continuing fascination for many gardeners, despite the blowzy charms of David Austin's English roses and so I found Suzanne Verrier's *Rosa Gallica* a great attraction. It is a small but intense work which must have involved a great deal of research and translation. The result is a concise and extensive survey of a hardy, honourable and ancient clan of European rose royalty. Much is made of the tough, disease resistant qualities of these plants; much too of their wonderful aristocratic names. With such a pedigree there seems an implicit expectation that there is something special about these roses, and I think Suzanne Verrier manages to suggest just that. But her admiration is more akin to besotted addiction than to commonsense appreciation of thrifty qualities and an antique kind of beauty. Drowning in roses is all very well but we need more objective information to guide us through so many superlatives. Not much is made of the vigorous suckering habit of these roses, nor is much attention paid to the challenges of integrating masses of once-flowering shrubs into a suburban garden. There are other problematical considerations of a deeper concern that are to do with how the names and varieties have come down to us, problems of verification and provenance; these are not discussed in sufficient detail for a book which claims to be an essential source of information. I found the photographs failed adequately to capture the wonderful murrey shades of beetroot, grape purple, lilac and slaty grey that are the hallmark of the roses of Provins. This is, however, a minor con-

sideration and should not deter any gardener not already familiar with this exceptionally adaptable, drought tolerant and prolific family of shrub roses. As an introduction, *Rosa Gallica* is excellent, as a monograph it is very good and as an inspiration it is inspiring.

Still on my theme of finding plants well suited to garden conditions in much of Australia, I found Dianne Ackland's *The Australian Rose Finder* an admirable companion when searching for several roses with which to complete garden designs that called for more choice and hardiness than David Austin's English roses provide. A straightforward book of lists and descriptions, its information is easily accessible and concise. The extensive categorised lists at the end of the book provide a useful resource for those unfamiliar with roses but who do know what colour, form or habit they want to employ in their plans. There is even a good list of Australian-bred roses for those who believe, as did Alister Clark, that roses could be bred with characteristics specially selected to suit the climates here. The roses listed are all commercially available.

Two American books suggest the possibilities offered by exploring unknown territory for plants that might prove useful here. No doubt there are many others in the same vein but I read *Cushion Plants for the Rock Garden* and *Rock Plants of North America*. The first is a collectors' book which deals in plants interesting for their survival mechanisms, particularly their far reaching tap roots which find a foothold in the rocks and rubble of scree slopes. I doubt we would be so interested in growing such plants in pots but perhaps there is room for trying a few in a dry stone garden wall and between paving slabs. It will take a few skilled alpine plant enthusiasts to get stocks started in Australia but the combination of such charming plants and such determined, skillful gardeners should bring that about in time. The book will provide a stimulus to their enthusiasm. The second book is more along the lines of a collection of plant hunters' tales. The members of the North American Rock Garden Society have long had a fascination with the alpine flora of the arid regions of their land and that interest is reflected to a limited extent in this collection of previously published articles from the journals of the society. As such it makes good reading, the kind that can be dipped into in those odd spare moments of rest between garden work and other chores. Australian gardeners in the Alps, the Dandenongs or the highlands of Tasmania may well find many plants described within the various contributions which they would like to pursue through seedlists and suchlike amateur exchanges. There are many gems to consider from the charming (and sometimes cranky) *Lewisiads* to the less familiar and exquisite *Dionysias* and dozens of genera inbetween. In years to come we plane dirt gardeners may benefit through an increased choice of such interesting hardy plants to use in our gardens.

Should the idea have grown that I am hinting that a style can't really come about until we have explored the fullest possible range of plants that might be used to give expression to our design ideas, I am pleased. Maybe you have already begun to look about for a broader range of plants which are candidates for your garden plans? Had you thought about succulent plants? Will you think about them? Yvonne Cave's book *The Succulent Garden* offers a good

ROSA GALLICA



selection of these colourful and almost drought proof plants. The author presents a photographic survey of a very varied group and while her pictures are taken in New Zealand – not usually thought of as being a dry country – they do show plants in garden settings. Even without the landscape illustrations, the contrasting forms of growth and foliage, the bold leaf shapes and colours, and the vivid flowers of many shown in the close-up shots will suggest to creative gardeners many ways of using them as accent plants and in mixed plantings. An excellent introduction to a group of plants on the verge of being revived after a long malaise under the clouds cast by the English flower garden.

Also out from under that same massive cloudbank has come Paul Bangay's book *The Defined Garden*. The bold title suggests a major dissertation, an idea reinforced by the sub-title *the garden design of Paul Bangay* and further impressed on casual readers by the blurbs on the front and back flaps and on the back cover. It all sounds very impressive with words such as 'passionate', 'striking', 'confident' used liberally to describe his vision. The seventeen gardens featured in the book are described with an equally lavish selection of superlatives; even the photographs are somehow taken 'sumptuously'. And it is true, the book does impress; it has that 'look at me and pick me up' quality about it – heavy paper, handsome design, large format, thick covers, elegant print widely spaced, arty four-tone cover, and an overall feeling of high refinement. For some, a lovely book may be sufficient in itself but the title led me to expect more, and as I came to the book via the Garden Design Conference in Melbourne, I was focussed and anticipatory, ready for some insights and background. I was expecting a definitive exposition which would help me to understand how Mr Bangay explores the relationship between a house, its setting and the local environment. What I got was rather less substantial. The book gives rise to more questions than it answers about the garden design of Paul Bangay. Is Mr Bangay's entire opus seventeen gardens? More are hinted at, but a list of commissions would be a necessary addition to a survey of a designer's work. The style, if it is that, appears all rather contradictory. The book claims each garden is developed from the designer's responses to the house and its site; so how is it that they all look much the same? Site plants would help demonstrate the statements that the designs provide 'strong axial layouts' and 'stunning solutions' to the challenges provided by the various sites. I had a few difficulties in accepting the restricted plant choices suggested by Mr Bangay too. Linking yourself with 'Capability' Brown simply on the basis of using a limited palette of plants seemed a rather bold assertion. It led me to question the wisdom of writing such a book about yourself without the benefit of a few more years distance than Mr Bangay yet has. What will all those closely planted Manchurian pear tree *allees* look like in twenty years time, in fifty years time; what will the box parterres look like? What advice was given to the garden owners about such matters? What forward planning has been done to manage the maturing design? How will it change? There are other questions too, to do with the interactive relationship between a garden and the gardener that are made subservient to the dominant motif of control. These questions may be answered by the

fact that the gardens were commissioned by 'busy' people who apparently do not do much gardening themselves, so the problems are more to do with management and presentation than participation and engagement. If that were accepted as the line of argument, does there not arise a question about how significant these design ideas would be to a nation that gardens actively?

And what can be made of such ponderous statements as 'I don't believe that the vegetable garden is the place for elaborate statuary'? I do not know what to think about this any more than I know what to think about the fact that all the garden ornament used looks backward to another era and to an old, now artistically *passee* European culture. My feet may be too lagged in clay to appreciate the qualities of this style but my head is clear; the lines of argument developed for the defined garden are not yet made definitive. Perhaps I was expecting too much?

Cushion Plants for the Rock Garden

by Duncan Lowe

Published by Timber Press, USA, 1996

RRP \$45.00

Rock Garden Plants of North America

North American Rock Garden Society (various authors)

Published by Timber Press, USA, 1996

RRP \$85.00

The Succulent Garden

by Yvonne Cave

Published by Florilegium, Sydney, 1996

RRP \$24.95

Rosa Gallica

by Suzanne Verrier

Published by Capability's Books, USA, 1995

RRP \$39.95

The Australian Rose Directory

by Dianne Ackland

Self-published at Mt Waverly, Victoria, 1996

RRP \$16.95

The Defined Garden

by Paul Bangay

Published by Viking, Melbourne, 1996

RRP \$49.95

Trevor Nottle, our regular book columnist, has been jetting throughout Australia and New Zealand to publicise his own recently launched book, *Gardens of the Sun*, which is reviewed here by George Seddon.

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GARDENS OF THE SUN

by Trevor Nottle

Published by Kangaroo Press, NSW 1996; and by

Timber Press, USA

208pp, colour illus. RRP \$39.95

review by GEORGE SEDDON

Gardens of the Sun is a welcome addition to Australian garden literature, in that it is a thoughtful discussion of garden design, and more important, of the preconceptions and ideas that lie behind design. It is also a book with a message: that it is more than time for a radical reformulation of ideas about desirable models in much of Australia. Trevor Nottle is not the first to say this, but he says it persuasively, in an amiably conversational style. It is a very personal book, with the outcome that it reads as if he is talking with his readers rather than at them.

The message is stated succinctly by the title, *Gardens of the Sun*. It is also communicated brilliantly by the colour illustrations, which are profuse, of very high quality photographically, and very persuasive. Many of them are by the author himself, and these include most of the photographs of individual plants, which include some of the best representations of succulents I have ever seen; among them *Aloe saponaria*, *Euphorbia uilii* and *Yucca elata*. These should convince the sceptical that this group of plants has much to offer, both practically and aesthetically, although as the author makes clear, both through text and illustration, that they need maintenance, as do most plants, and careful placing to be effective (the latter is shown especially well by the *Aloe saponaria*, which is planted in a large drift against a background of green rather than as a single specimen in isolation). It is notable also that this photograph was taken at Carmel in California, and many other images also come either from California or the Mediterranean, including the stunning dust jacket, which has the Exotic Garden at Monte Carlo on the front, full of brilliantly placed succulents on limestone cliffs against blue sea and sky, and on the back cover a quiet green and grey-green garden near Carpentras in the Vaucluse.

These and all the images in the book make their point powerfully, which is to attempt a paradigm shift in the way we conceptualise the garden in the hot and summer-dry parts of Australia (which covers most of Australia, excepting only the far North and humid East Coast). Nevertheless, they raise questions, some of which are horticultural, some design based, and some relating to the equivalence of climate zones.

To take the last first; Trevor Nottle's deservedly admired gardens from coastal California and the Mediterranean come from zones that have few close equivalents in Australia. Rome is comparable in latitude with Hobart, Monte Carlo with Christchurch in the South Island of New Zealand, while Carpentras, in terms of latitude, is right off the map, south of Tasmania, as is nearly all of Provence; in comparison with the west coast of North America, its equivalent is Eugene, Oregon. Adelaide falls about 200kms south of Tunis in North Africa. As for Perth, where I garden, our

equivalent is Marrakesh, well down into northwest Africa, backed by the Sahara. Latitude is not the sole determinant of climate, and there is that Gulf Stream, but it does determine critically important factors such as day length, hours of sunlight at different times of the year, and above all, the degree to which the sun is 'overhead' in mid-summer.

As it happens, I am writing this review in Southern California, at Santa Monica. Like Nottle, I have long been aware

of how well designed are so many gardens in California, planned to be 'gardens of the sun' and using appropriate, sun-tolerant plants, many of them Australian. But I am also struck by how much easier it is in California. Despite the almost total dependence on supplementary watering in Los Angeles (extravagant, but skillfully



applied from the technical point of view), plants flourish readily that need much more care in Perth, the reason being that the soils are much better, and the climate relatively mild. Perth's equivalent latitude is to be found half-way down Baja California, well south of San Diego into Mexico, where the summer is fierce.

Another question these images raise is about the visual quality that comes from age, and from the recognition of the beauty of age; the gnarled trunks of olives in Provence, the twisted forms of old trees in the Mission gardens of California. Here in Santa Monica, the ocean front park above the sea cliffs has many specimens of *Melaleuca uesophila* with wonderfully sculptural trunks. They were planted in the late 20s so are ninety years old, but they have also been pruned and supported to reveal the beauty of the trunks for many years, a practice that Nottle would applaud, in contrast with the tidy-minded pruning habits of most Australians, which aim to reduce irregular, sculptural forms rather than to reveal and delight in them. There are also some horticultural questions side-stepped by photographs; for example, there is a charming photograph of *Crinum powellii* 'Alba' in flower, but in my experience the flowers, lovely though they be, are very short lived, the foliage coarse, wind-tattered, snail-infested, in short not worth having unless you have a very large garden. I would also note in passing that at least in Perth many succulents prefer shade to sun, and that is often also their natural habitat, both in Arizona/New Mexico and the Karoo in South Africa, where they are often to be found in desert conditions, but on the north side of a rock (or south side in South Africa). Although drought tolerant, such plants are not literally for 'gardens of the sun'.

The above points do not constitute a criticism of Nottle's

primary thesis, which I wholeheartedly endorse. They are, rather, a reminder of the climatic and physical variety in Australia, even in the summer-dry parts that we (rather loosely) label 'Mediterranean'. They are also a reminder that the book was co-published with Timber Press in Oregon, and is therefore addressed to a West Coast American readership, which explains both the bias and the price; it is very good value for \$39.95, a price inconceivable without its wider audience. It is, nevertheless, as much a romantic fantasy that we can have gardens like Carmel or Portofino in Perth as it is to think we can have them like Sissinghurst or Bodnant. The fundamental point is that the design lessons from Carmel are generally more relevant to our needs than those from Bodnant in North Wales.

The words of Nottle's text complement the images, and in discussing the images, I have therefore enunciated the main theses already. They can be summed up by a phrase near the end of the book: 'I want to give some encouragement to those who want to make their garden a pleasant environment that suits their lifestyle and is at home with the climate, soil and circumstances' (p.194). This view is antithetic to consumerism, the fads of fashion, to pretension in all its forms. The body of the text sounds familiar in summary – there is the expected chapter on the importance of shade, both practical and psychological; of water features, no matter how modest; of old trunks and of orchard trees; of the importance of quality in hard structures, especially of walls and stone work; and above all, of the design possibilities of drought tolerant plant material. But bold summary does not do the book justice, because it does not communicate the speaking voice of the author; his tone is exploratory, sometimes quirky, always with a deep love and knowledge of the living plant world. It is the voice of a real gardener talking to friends, and by the end of the book, I feel as if I know the author well (I would certainly like to). He *makes* friends in this book.

The book is well-designed and well-printed (in Hong Kong). Some of the photographs are exquisitely presented, for example, that of *Plectranthus argenteus*, cropped to an oval. This, by the way, is one of the few silver-leaved plants that is happy in light shade; it is also one of the few plants of Australian origin figured in the book, which has two Banksias, a Kunzea, a Grevillea and a Sturt's Desert Pea, but is generally eclectic. Plants are admired for their form and their suitability rather than their nationality, a reasonable position.

My only quibbles regarding the presentation of the book are minor; the type-faces of the opening pages are eccentric; the pages are left-justified only, which leaves a ragged and wasteful right margin, and there are quite a few errors that a good copy editor should have picked up. For example, the Butchart Gardens on Vancouver Island in British Columbia are called 'The Burchart Gardens near Seattle in British Columbia' whereas the gardens are near the city of Victoria, and Seattle is in the State of Washington. On another page, the steep sided vineyards of the Rhone Valley grow grapes that produce Rieslings; but the Rhone is in Southern France, not Germany. Santorini is called 'Santinori' and a quincunx is described as a 'double row of trees planted in a square pattern', but a quincunx is a figure of five objects, as the

name indicates; in the case of trees, four as the corners of a square with the fifth in the middle. This figure can be repeated, but it still does not make up 'a double row'. Pages 150 and 151 do not link, and there is at least a line missing. And so on – I noted quite a number of such slips, but we all make them, and they are petty against the solid achievements of the book.

The achievements of this book spring from years of experience of gardening, of design, of intelligent travel, of reflection, of extensive and eclectic reading, and of notable horticultural knowledge. Professional landscape architects in Australia are seldom plantmen, but Trevor Nottle is both plantsman and designer. He illustrates and discusses a number of plants that I don't know but should; there is a mouthwatering *Cantua pyrifolia* and a *Dietes* from Lord Howe Island and some twenty two *Agapanthus* species and subspecies are listed, with as many named cultivars again, in a gem of a chapter entitled 'A is for Agapanthus', a chapter that lists and discusses a whole range of desirable plants. In the penultimate chapter there is a further list of plants to experiment with in dry gardens, few of them available in the plant supermarkets we call nurseries. Fortunately, he lists both seed sources and societies in an appendix which will doubtless lead to a flurry of overseas mail from Australia, since most of them are in the USA and Europe. It is here more than anywhere else that Nottle's vast knowledge of plant material is evident.

That Nottle's message is timely and important there can be no doubt. I attended the Toowoomba conference of the AGHS and greatly enjoyed the company, the talks and the gardens we visited, especially Franklyn Vale, a moving unpretentious old homestead garden, a sanctuary in a fairly hostile setting. But Toowoomba itself was in the throes of its Floral Festival, full of the horticulturally skilled generally pursuing patently inappropriate goals. Australians are extraordinarily reluctant to accept the realities of their environment.

I will end this review with a story. Last year I was listening to the car radio, and the program was a quiz competition for ten-year olds in Perth. A boy was neck and neck with a girl. For the last question, the boy was asked: 'In what season do trees lose their leaves?' He paused for a moment, then replied: 'Winter'. The girl, who could not hear the boy, said 'Autumn'. She gave the expected answer, and won the competition and prize. But the boy was right. In Perth, most deciduous trees keep their leaves right through until June or later – Jacaranda, the deciduous oaks, frangipani, while my *Tipuana* loses them in late September. Only a small minority lose them in autumn. The boy was penalised for being right, for observing the actual world around him rather than for giving a text-book answer based on a cool-climate background. So I welcome Trevor Nottle's book, and wish it well. Read it; indeed, buy it.

George Seddon is now an Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Studies in Australian Literature at the University of Western Australia. Professor Seddon became an Honorary Fellow of the AILA in 1979 and later Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at the University of Melbourne. He has written a number of influential books and articles, his latest being *Swan Song*.

by HELEN PAGE

How can I fit two months at the Institute for Advanced Architectural Studies at the University of York, taking part in the 'Theory and Policy-making for Landscape Conservation' course, into a postcard?

This course is the first term of the MA in Garden and Landscape Conservation which is run in parallel with the MA in Building Conservation. In the group there are 8 'Landscapers' and 32 'Builders' from 16 countries. I am the only representative from the southern hemisphere.

Early in the term, to set the scene, the 40 participants went on an 8 day study tour to the Cotswolds and surrounding counties. With more than 20 sites visited we saw a wide range of types, conditions, management practices and other variables to draw on during the course.

Since then we have had a comprehensive lecture programme of an exceptional standard and I can only touch on the highlights in this postcard.

Conservation legislation has been covered in detail with special mention made of the significance of the Burra Charter on the international scene. A particularly interesting day was conducted by Christopher Dingwall, the Garden History Society's Conservation Officer in Scotland.

He titled his day 'A View from the Front Line' and walked us through several of his Scottish case histories.

Peter Goodchild has shared with us in incredible detail the classification and assessment of landscapes. These lectures have been reinforced for us when Peter has accompanied us around Harewood, Studley Royal, Castle Howard and Bramham Park. These are days I will never forget.

Another memorable day with Peter was spent looking at vernacular landscapes. We explored the village of Appleton-Le-Moors in North Yorkshire. This village was laid out as a planned village in medieval times and has survived for the most part intact with little evidence of modern interventions.

As part of our Harewood Estate project we visited the Leeds District Archives Office where we studied plans of the estate back to 1698, early estate record books and correspondence relating to the gardens and parkland from people such as Humphry Repton. This was followed by a visit to the estate and finalised with a further visit where we examined a current proposal for the relocation of the car park



Historic King's Manor, York. The base for the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies at the University of York. Originally the Abbots house of St Mary's Abbey, the King's Manor served the Tudors and the Stuarts as a seat of government.

and visitor centre. To confirm the controversial nature of this proposal, our group of 8 could not reach a consensus. We presented two cases to the Harewood House Estate management for their consideration.

I joined the 'Builders' group for their 'Regeneration through Art' programme. This day addressed how works of art in public spaces make a significant impact on the regeneration of rural landscape and urban spaces. Four lectures and a visit to York Minster (how fortunate to have that 'across the road') provided a stimulating day. The words that came through to me all day were collaboration, consultation, ownership and accessibility.

Next week Christopher Ridgeway the Librarian from Castle Howard is conducting a day with us on 'Landscape in Literature'. Victorian members will recall that Christopher gave us an interesting lecture on Castle Howard a few years ago, while visiting Melbourne. This follows a day this week on 'Landscape in Painting' with two lectures to open our eyes and then a guided tour through the York Art Gallery with the Curator of the collection.

The 'landscapers' are travelling to London late next week to attend a seminar 'There by Design: Field Archaeology in Parks and Gardens' being run by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England and the Garden History Society. I am looking forward to meeting many Garden History Society members on that day.

This is an extremely abbreviated summary of two months in York, suffice to say it has been a wonderful experience and I look forward to putting some of the knowledge gained to good use when I return home.

HELEN PAGE continues her postcards from abroad while she takes a year out to travel and study overseas.

PARTERRES AND PELARGONIUMS: GEORGE BRUNNING AND WILLIAM ANDREWS NESFIELD

by RICHARD AITKEN

Directories are a remarkably useful tool in garden history research, providing details of names, addresses and often occupations in a given year. Notes are currently being compiled from street directories as part of the *Database on Australian Gardens and Horticulture* and in many cases such entries considerably augment otherwise meagre biographical information. Australian directories are of course not the only directories of use in this way and some work has recently been undertaken using British directories to trace the early career of our pioneering nursery proprietors, landscape gardeners and horticulturists.

For the early to mid-nineteenth century, there are regrettably very few directories which cover large geographical areas, and most are concentrated on a specific town and its hinterland, making searching very tedious. One such directory which I chanced upon recently, was William White's *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Suffolk* (1855). Recalling that prominent Victorian nursery proprietor George Brunning had come from Lowestoft in Suffolk, I checked his name, but found only that of his father, John Brunning, listed in London Road as a gardener and seedsman. The omission of George Brunning is confirmed by his entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, which states that George Brunning arrived in Melbourne in June 1853. Further on in White's directory is the listing for Peto of Somerleyton Hall which jogged my memory (from the *Australian Database* entry) that George Brunning had trained in this well-known Suffolk garden.

Somerleyton Hall was the seat of Sir Samuel Morton Peto, who amassed a fortune as a builder and entrepreneur. He invested in railways in Argentina, Canada and Australia, was a Member of Parliament and was a guarantor of the Great Exhibition of 1851. He employed the sculptor and architect John Thomas, a protégé of Prince Albert, to redesign Somerleyton Hall, which he largely rebuilt between 1844 and 1851. The work was undertaken on a lavish scale and by 1866 Peto was bankrupt (although his architectural and horticultural excesses were presumably not the sole reason for this fiscal decline).

Coincident with my research into British directories, I found a copy of a new publication *William Andrews Nesfield: Victorian Landscape Architect*. This consists of papers from Nesfield Bicentenary Conference held in York in 1994 and is available from the publisher, the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York (c/- The King's Manor, York, YO1 2EP, UK). The work has been edited by Christopher Ridgeway, librarian at Castle Howard, a Nesfield expert and contributor of two informative essays. Many Australian Garden History Society members will recall his visit to Australia in 1993 and his entertaining illustrated lectures on the work of Nesfield and the conservation work recently undertaken at Castle Howard. Other papers included in this volume include a perceptive analysis of 'Nesfield in

his Victorian context', by Dr Brent Elliott, librarian of the Royal Horticultural Society's Lindley Library (and author of the definitive work on nineteenth century British garden design, *Victorian Gardens*), a useful life of Nesfield by Shirley Andrews, and several essays on Nesfield projects where conservation work is in progress.

Seeing this set of conference papers, which incorporated so much new research from the Nesfield archive held in Australia, I was encouraged to seek out M.J. Tooley's *William Andrews Nesfield, 1794-1881: Exhibition Guide* (Michaelmas Books, Witton-le-Wear, Durham, 1994), published to accompany the Nesfield centenary exhibition. Tooley discloses that Nesfield designed the terrace, parterre, stone balustrading and dial at Somerleyton Hall, and also possibly the maze which was planted in English Yew in 1846. This period of Nesfield's involvement at Somerleyton coincides almost exactly with the training of George Brunning at the same garden, and, even if we cannot be certain that the two met, it is almost certain that Brunning would have seen Nesfield's parterre and other works being constructed and planted. In this way, first hand knowledge of the most advanced British garden design was being transported to Australia and we now require detailed research to see the influence of Nesfield's revival of the formal parterre on the colonial landscape.

Somerleyton was described by several contemporary horticultural observers, and in March 1853 the *Floricultural Cabinet* included reminiscences of the garden by 'Riscemara':

Our summer rambles extended to Lowestoft, in which vicinity the hot-houses, grounds and hall of Somerleyton attracted our attention...the conservatory contains striking specimens of Pelargonium, grown to immense size, and the blossoms open, as it were, all at once. I believe the plants were a yard in diameter...The Ericas, Epacris, &c. were grown in very large pots; the effect of these plants was exquisite...

I have quoted this passage at length since it contains two possible links with George Brunning. The first is the mention of the collection of *Epacris* sp., from Australia (from whence some of the *Erica* sp. may also have been collected), and it is tempting to think that these may have been an introduction to the teenage Brunning of his adopted country. The second is the pelargonium collection, which was obviously a feature of Somerleyton. These, too, were a speciality of George Brunning and his interest may well have derived from his early training here. E.E. Pescott, in his informative article 'The Pioneers of Horticulture in Victoria' (*Victorian Historical Magazine*, February 1940), describes the arrival of George Rimington, who later established the Park Hill Nursery in the eastern Melbourne suburb of Kew:

After receiving his training in the gardens and glasshouses of the Earl of Chesterfield and Sir Edward Mosely, romance came to this youth, who was attracted to Australia at the age of 19. Arriving on board the S.S. 'Great Britain' in 1871, he found there a consignment of Regal Pelargoniums despatched to George Brunning of Melbourne. George Rimington offered to take care of the plants, and to attend to them during the voyage to Australia.

Pescott adds that the consignment was landed in excel-

lent condition and this connection with George Brunning, so interestingly begun, continued with increasing friendship throughout their lives. Perhaps the young apprentice Brunning found a similar link in friendship with the experienced Nesfield at Somerleyton. I dare say we will never know unless George Brunning's diary is discovered in some long-forgotten trunk.

Richard Aitken is an architect and historian.

LETTERS

I was most excited to read Richard Aitken's article on *Australia's Earliest Gardening Books* in the last issue of this journal. I am always anxious to add any book I may have missed to my *History and Bibliography of Australian Gardening Books*. I already have recommendations from Noel Lothian and Richard Clough which add a few titles 'not in Crittenden'. As I plan to produce a new revised edition next year, Richard Aitken's information is valuable and notice of missing books is more than welcome.

I might have contended that the two books recorded by Richard Aitken are not really 'Australian' in spite of an Australian publisher being mentioned, among others, on the title page. The books were not written by a person in Australia nor were they based on Australian conditions, nor were they about Australian plants or even printed in Australia. They were merely part of British publishers' imperial colonisation of the continent. In spite of that fact I *will* include them in the next edition as interesting aspects of Australian gardening history. More especially as Thomas Tegg of London and his sons James and Samuel were very much involved in our early publishing history. The second work, J.C. Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture* was very influential in Australian architecture, especially domestic houses, as well as gardening history. Not only that, but the publisher William McGarvie of Sydney listed on the title page actually published the first Australian gardening book by Thomas Shepherd in 1835. It could be argued that the publication of Loudon's work in 1833 encouraged him to publish both of Thomas Shepherd's books, *The Horticulture of New South Wales* and *Landscape Gardening in Australia*. These were both important firsts in Australian gardening books.

The other aspect of Aitken's article which interested me was the comment on *Tegg's Magazine* and the story in it called 'The Governess' which contained descriptions of the Sydney Botanic Gardens. In the July 1996 edition of *Margin, Life and Letters of Early Australia* I wrote an article about John Lang and the publisher James Tegg. There I claimed that 'The Governess' was written by John Lang, our first Australian-born novelist. Aitken quotes an annotation in the British Library copy of *Tegg's Magazine* signed J.G.. Interesting, as John Lang's full name was John George Lang. This rather confirms my theory. The annotation in the Sydney copy gives the name of the girl, Julia (Miss Marchmont), as well as the man, Claremont, as Francis the son of Judge Stephen, as the two characters concerned. Interestingly in real life the young lady did not

become a confirmed maniac but happily married another man. John Lang merely added the maniac idea for dramatic effect. As the story was published in 1836, it does give one of the earliest descriptions of the Sydney Botanic Gardens which officially began life in 1816 during the reign of Governor Macquarie. The Botanic Gardens after all, is what Richard Aitken was writing about. What I find so valuable in this matter is not that I have missed something in my bibliography but how my interests in two quite different subjects, early Australian gardens and early Australian literature, can produce such important evidence which fills in significant gaps in the knowledge of each field.

Victor Crittenden

The residents of Bickleigh Vale have failed in their attempt to prevent the sub-division of Sonning, the original home of Edna Walling.

In late November, the Minister for Planning and Local Government in Victoria approved an amendment to the Shire of Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, which will allow excision of approximately 2,000 square metres from the Edna Walling Lane frontage of the property. This will destroy the integrity of the whole area as Sonning was the centrepiece of Bickleigh Vale village.

AGHS supported the residents by making a submission to the independent panel appointed by the Minister to investigate the proposal. However, the panel considered as there had been previous subdivisions, there would be no detrimental effect. This is the very reason the existing conditions were included in the Planning Scheme, to protect the area from further subdivision.

The approval is subject to the present owner entering into an agreement with the Shire Council under Section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, which provides for the preparation of a Restoration and Maintenance Management Plan for the existing dwelling (Sonning) and the garden areas, by a suitable qualified architect and/or landscape architect.

No mention is made as to whether this person should be experienced in historic buildings or landscapes and it is ironic that during the twelve months that has elapsed since the application was submitted, stone and concrete edging has been put in place in the Sonning garden.

A number of other conditions apply in respect of building design and materials to be used on the subdivided property, but there is no mention of the removal of any trees to enable a house to be built.

An application to have the whole area listed on the Victorian Heritage Register was lodged last June in an attempt to protect the area, but this has been stalled and it must be doubted as to the effectiveness or intent of this legislation to protect such areas as Bickleigh Vale.

With the subdivision set to go ahead, it would appear that it will only be a matter of time before other applications for amendments to the Planning Scheme are forthcoming, and it would be reasonable to expect that they also would be approved, thus bringing to an end part of our national heritage.

John Isbel
Glencairn, Bickleigh Vale, Mooroolbark

JAMES DRUMMOND – COLONIAL BOTANIST AT THE SWAN RIVER COLONY (1784-1863)

by SUE AND MICHAEL DAVIS



Drummond arrived at the Swan River in 1829 with his wife and six children aboard the 'Parmelia', the first ship to bring free settlers to the shores of Western Australia. He and his wife, both in their mid-forties, with high hopes and ambitions for their new life as colonial land owners and holders of public office, were as ill-prepared as their fellow passengers

for the hardships, disappointments and frustrations that were to follow.

Born at Hawthornden in Scotland in 1784, Drummond had taken up a position as Curator of the Botanic Gardens in Cork, Ireland, at the age of twenty-two. Here, the youthful enthusiastic botanist was involved in the testing and propagation of plants for the farming communities of Southern Ireland, an occupation which, when an economic recession in the late 1820s saw the funding for this position withdrawn, left him with the agricultural experience deemed appropriate for colonising. Jobless, with six dependant children, he jumped at the offer of a passage with Captain Stirling to the Swan River Colony. His appointment as Government botanist was honorary with the added inducement of a salaried position as Superintendent should the establishment of a public garden be felt necessary.

Drummond and his family thus became embroiled in the socio-political events of their time. The British government, struggling to recover from the financially debilitating Napoleonic Wars, found itself with redundant soldiers and frustrated military officers on half pay. There were few prospects for the landless younger sons of well-to-do families. At first the British government turned a deaf ear to Stirling's report of a 'rich and romantic' land on the west coast of Australia and his recommendations for a settlement there. Only when persuaded that the French were about to annex the so far unclaimed western third of Australia did the British government act to provide minimal support for a non-convict settlement in which colonists would be entitled to free land grants according to the value of their stock, tools and servants. The disenfranchised, the opportunists, the adventurous and the impoverished were ripe for the ensuing propaganda campaign. 'Swan River Mania', actively promoted by the press, gripped Britain. Claims of the fecundity and savanna-like qualities of Western Australian pastures were wildly exaggerated. Profiteers were soon demanding highly inflated prices for passages to the colony.

In this climate of highly speculative euphoria Drummond arrived off the Western Australian coast to howling winter gales which prevented an immediate landfall. A temporary base on an offshore island allowed him to plant some cuttings and seeds. Weeks turned to months as the steadily

growing community bore the brunt of winter in beachside encampments while awaiting the surveying of land onshore which had not been done before their arrival.

By late 1829, Drummond was able to select two grants on the Swan River, the first of which was 'to establish a public nursery, fruit and vegetable garden and to grow for sale such seeds as may be required in the colony'. The demise of this garden is unclear but the establishment of a formal government garden did not get under way until 1831, when Governor Stirling decided upon a site adjoining Government House. To Drummond's delight, he was finally appointed Superintendent at a salary of £100 per annum.

Barely twelve months later, Drummond's salary was withdrawn when Stirling departed the colony to harangue the Colonial Office in London over their parsimonious attitude towards the fledgling colony. Drummond accepted the responsibility of managing the gardens by way of selling whatever produce he could raise. The salaried position of Superintendent was never restored. Two years later, after a bitter argument with Stirling over his continued residence on site, Drummond resigned. Embittered and humiliated by the public quarrel with the Governor, devastated by the loss of his home and possessions in a fire on his second grant of land, impoverished and in poor mental health, he withdrew to the isolation of a small holding in the hills beyond Perth.

Seclusion suited Drummond. Relieved of official duties, he was free to pursue his great love – collecting seeds and plants. His home overflowed with the bounty of his collections together with those of his sons, whose insect and bird collections were built up while shepherding, hunting or searching for lost stock. His health improved and once again the forces of history conspired to impact upon his life.

Fanned by the writings in botanical journals edited by such distinguished botanists as Lindley and Hooker, horticulture, and in particular the growing of exotic plants, was at fever pitch in Britain and Europe. Lindley regularly published articles by Captain James Mangles whose cousin was Lady Stirling of the Swan River Colony. Mangles approached Drummond with requests for large numbers of seed and plant specimens which Drummond supplied immediately. Between 1836 and 1839 Drummond shipped hundreds of seeds and plants to Mangles who sold them to wealthy patrons and private collectors. Undeterred by the irregularities of shipping schedules, losses of plant specimens en route and of seeds eaten in thousands by insects, Drummond's passion for collecting never waned. When Mangles' enthusiasm faded, Hooker's surfaced. He and Hooker remained correspondents all their lives.

By 1838, the family had re-established themselves at Toodyay in the Avon Valley where their historic farming property, Hawthornden can be seen today. Drummond continued to travel widely in the colony collecting seeds. More than sixty plants are named in his honour. After his death in 1863, Drummond's extensive herbarium was placed into the care of Ferdinand von Mueller at the State Herbarium of Victoria.

Sue and Michael Davis are both committee members of the AGHS WA Branch. They garden in Perth and at the historic town of Toodyay, 80km north-east of the city. This is the fourth article in our alphabetical profile of prominent identities in Australia's horticultural world.

GRANT FOR SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH

The Southern Highlands branch has recently received a grant from the Heritage Council for \$7,500 for tree care at the Hillview garden in Sutton Forest. John Stowar prepared the detailed submission outlining the need for financial assistance in maintaining the valuable tree collection at Hillview.

The grant is to be used over the coming twelve months and the objectives are to:

- Carry out further tree surgery work on existing trees;
- Establish a guided tree walk with permanent tree labels for significant trees within the collection;
- Create a level path throughout the collection with earth-moving equipment to allow access to trees on steep sites;
- Establish new collections of trees to extend the existing arboretum;
- Install tree guards for stock protection to plantings in the paddocks.

The society plans to use some local voluntary labour, as has been done in the past, in caring for the trees.

The care of the trees and garden at Hillview is an ongoing project of the Garden History Society in the Southern Highlands and will ensure the conservation of a significant horticultural asset in the years to come.

A number of open days are organised by the AGHS Southern Highlands Branch throughout the year to enable members and visitors to view Hillview.

CHAMPAGNE AND ROSES

The AGHS ACT, Monaro and Riverina Branch ended their year's events with some bubbly in three wonderful old gardens on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River on the outskirts of Canberra. Noted Heritage Rosarian, Peter Cox, travelled with his wife from Thirlmere to Canberra for the day to help identify a number of old roses in the Old Tuggeranong Homestead garden. Tuggeranong Homestead and complex dates back to 1837 when the first building, a pise cottage, was erected. The twenty-nine room homestead was built in 1908 by the Cunninghams. Bean, the First World War historian, worked at the homestead on his history of the war for several years.

The Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead (MOTH) have fought a valiant battle to keep the precinct around the buildings clear of development. Now they are working to clear the orchard of weeds, seedlings and suckers, to identify the trees and to care for them. A number of old roses were identified and noted for future reference.

The group then continued on to Cuppacumbalong Homestead where pilgrimage was made to the giant arbutus mentioned in Robert Boden's article on pages 6-7. Many succumbed to the temptations of Aylwyen's Herbarium and a wander through the main garden and gallery. Then on to Lambrigg, originally home of William James Farrer and it was here that he conducted his internationally acclaimed experiments in growing early maturing drought and disease resistant wheat strains. He is buried on the property and his laboratory still remains and is used as a cottage.

It was here in the ambience of giant trees and fragrant roses that visitors meandered around the spacious garden with champagne in hand. Our thanks to Pete and Kate Gullett for their gracious hospitality into this special garden.

ROBERTSON RURAL RAMBLE

On Sunday 17 November, one hundred and fifteen people travelled to 'Babe' town for the Robertson Rural Ramble arranged by the AGHS Southern Highlands Branch. Visitors came from as far away as Sydney, Canberra and Milton to view three unusual gardens.



Garden History members enjoying their ramble through Lauredale at Robertson, NSW.

First to Twin Creeks on Old Kangaloon Road, an 1857 house restored by Rob and Sandra Wallis. Five years ago they commenced major earth works to dam the local springs, creating lakes and waterfalls through the rainforest with new plantings of trees and shrubs.

Then on to Tony and Robin Donnelly at Woodland at East Kangaloon. This five year old house is wonderfully colourful with Portuguese floor tiles, wall plaques and wisteria covered pergolas, unusual outdoor sculptures in the garden and paddocks beyond. Garden plantings reflect and compliment the house colours. Lunch in the garden was interrupted by a Spring deluge but country people have a knack of making light of unplanned mishaps and soon everyone was undercover enjoying a delicious lunch prepared by the Robertson Show Auxiliary. The sun came out and we were able to continue on to Richard and Helen Rowe's lovely garden, Lauredale, where agapanthus are growing in surrounding paddocks for export. Within the garden, mature trees underplanted with shrubs and perennials blend the garden and surrounding landscape into one.

Our grateful thanks to the Wallis, Donnelly and Rowe families for a most enjoyable day.

JOURNAL MAIL-OUT

Thanks to Marika Kocsis, Jane Bunney, Georgina Whitehead, Di Ellerton, Pam Jellie and Jackie Courmadias for packing the last issue of the Journal.

JOURNAL DEADLINE FOR COPY AND ADVERTISING

March/April issue: Deadline 15 January.

Advertising rates

1/8 page	\$120 (2 or more issues \$110)
1/4 page	\$200 (2 or more issues \$180)
1/2 page	\$300 (2 or more issues \$250)
full page	\$500 (2 or more issues \$450)
Inserts	\$400 per page

E-mail address for articles, advertising or letters: trisha@srm.blamac.com.au

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

WEDNESDAY 12 Victoria – Explore two contrasting inner city parks with a guided tour of the newly created Dye Works Park, Simmons Street, South Yarra (Melway 58 E4) and the charming Victoria Gardens, High Street, Prahran. **Time** 6pm at Dyeworks Park then across to Victoria Gardens for a BYO picnic tea and talk. **Cost** Members \$4 and guests \$6. **Enquiries** (03) 9836 1881.

SUNDAY 23 NSW – Hunters Hill Walk – interesting gardens and homes of the peninsula area. **Time 4.30pm. Enquiries** (02) 9428 5947.

TUESDAY 25–SUNDAY 2 MARCH *Tasmania* – Tour of Tasmanian gardens with Fairie Nielsen.

MARCH

SUNDAY 2 Sydney – Guided walk of the shady small streets, sandstone buildings and cottage gardens of the historic French suburb of Hunters Hill. Visit Vienna Cottage and orchard. **Venue** Meet at 38 Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill. **Time** 3.30pm to commence walk at 4pm. **Cost** \$5. **Enquiries** (02) 9428 5947.

Wednesday 12 NSW Southern Highlands – Morning visit to Duxfield specialist nursery with talk by owner about unusual perennials. Morning tea will be provided. **Venue** Duxfield Nursery, Illawarra Highway, Moss Vale. **Time** 10.30am. **Cost** Members \$8, non-members \$10. **Bookings and enquiries** Dorothy Sears (048) 834 324 and Nicholas Bray (048) 611 315.

APRIL

Sunday 20 NSW Southern Highlands – Open day at Hillview, Illawarra Highway, Sutton Forest, former country residence of Governors of NSW. This is an opportunity to

visit Hillview on your way to the pre-conference tour. **Venue** Hillview, Illawarra Highway, Sutton Forest. **Time** 10 am-4 pm. **Cost** Non-members \$4. **Enquiries** Trish Goodman 048 683 581.

MONDAY 21-WEDNESDAY 23 NSW – Pre-Conference Tour of 19th century gardens in Bungendore, Braidwood and Monaro districts. Tour departs and finishes in Canberra with one evening at the Carrington in Braidwood and another at Cooma. **Cost** \$450 (Members) twin share.

FRIDAY 25-SUNDAY 27 ACT - 1997 Annual AGHS Conference in Canberra. The City as Garden is the theme of the Conference, which will explore gardens in the 20th century city of Canberra. Enjoy Canberra's rich garden history during the splendour of autumn. Booking form enclosed. **Enquiries** (06) 258 4547 or (03) 9650 5043.

MONDAY 28 ACT Optional day visiting a range of urban and rural gardens including embassies, Lambrigg Station and the garden at the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex at Tidbinbilla. (Booking form enclosed.)

WINTER

ACT – A series of four lectures on the history and meaning of gardens by Professor Ken Taylor and Dianne Firth, Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Canberra. The lectures will review the art of gardens from the earliest times of the classical world, through the paradise gardens of Islam and Renaissance Italy, the English tradition and Eighteenth century landscape ideology, to the Australian tradition. Phone the ACT/Monaro and Riverrina Branch on 06 258 4547 to ensure place on list.

1998

WA is hosting the 1988 National AGHS Conference in Perth during Spring 1998.

I/we wish to become a member of the Australian Garden History Society and enclose my/our subscription.

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The Society is affiliated with the Australian Council of National Trusts and is thereby able to benefit from Trusts' tax deductible status.

*Donations are welcome and should be made payable to the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and forwarded to the AGHS.

Membership benefits Australian Garden History, the Society's official journal, six times a year. Garden related seminars, lectures, garden visits and specialist tours. Opportunity to attend annual conference and conference tour. Contributing to the preservation of historic gardens for prosperity.

AGHS Office, Royal Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Ave, South Yarra, Vic. 3141 Ph/Fax (03) 9650 5043 Toll Free 1800 67 8446

THIS FORM CAN BE PHOTOCOPIED SO THAT THE JOURNAL CAN BE RETAINED INTACT.

GARDEN HISTORY ON TOUR

The Australian Garden History Society offers the chance to visit some of the country's finest gardens this summer and autumn. No need to organise accommodation and fuss over maps with two specialist tours planned by people who know the gardens intimately.

Fairie Nielsen is known and loved by gardeners throughout Tasmania and beyond and will be leading a five day tour of Tasmanian gardens, historic houses and colonial properties at the end of February. The tour will leave Launceston on Tuesday 25 February and finish in Launceston on the morning of Sunday 2 March. Tasmanian hospitality will be a highlight at the gardens in the Tamar River, Longford and Midlands area of Tasmania. Among gardens to be visited will be Dunedin, Culzean, Bowthorpe, Connorville, Esk Farm, Winton, Symonns Plains and Woolmers.

Bookings close 25 January.

Contact Jackie Courmadias on (03) 9650 5043 for details of these events.



Century old box hedges in the Winton garden, which dates back to the 1820s.



The Dunedin garden which surrounds the 1860 home is full of rare, treasured plants from all corners of the world, propagated by Annabel Scott.

There is also the chance to see some of the historic high country gardens of NSW in their autumn glory. Three days of visiting 19th century colonial gardens such as Micalago Station, Coolringdon, Hazeldean and Myalla on the Monaro, Manar and Durham Hall at Braidwood and Gidleigh at Bungendore. The tour will leave Canberra on Monday morning 21 April and return on the evening of Wednesday 23 April. For people attending the AGHS Conference commencing on Friday 25 April, there will be a day to unwind in Canberra and the chance of attending the Dawn Service on Anzac Day at the War Memorial.



Manar at Braidwood dates back to 1841 when owner Hugh Gordon wrote to his brother in Scotland for seeds.



Micalago Station has been in the Ryrie family for five generations and dates back to 1835.



Gidleigh at Bungendore is an historically significant garden with its huge old oaks, original design and wonderful old buildings.

COULD THIS BE LADY MEDALLIST?

by ANNIE MAYO

Alister Clark's first successful rose, The Lady Medallist, bred in 1912, disappeared without trace – or did it?



ANNIE MAYO

In late July 1995 Margaret Chadwick, a nurse at Margaret River Hospital, was chatting to Daisy Maud Summerfield, a lively lady still fully in charge of her faculties and a permanent care resident of the hospital. The subject of conversation was one close to both their hearts – gardening, and especially roses. Daisy mentioned that as a young woman she had three favourites in her garden. Marechal Neil, Lady Hillingdon and Lady Medallist, describing Lady Medallist as being ‘delightful and absolutely covered in roses in spring.’ Margaret knew of both Marechal Neil and Lady Hillingdon, but Lady Medallist was a mystery. Knowing how Margaret loved roses, Daisy suggested that she request a cutting from her son Cliff. This Margaret did, and while tending it with loving care, began a search for a reference to a rose she had never heard of.

Searching for information about the elusive Lady Medallist, Margaret drew a blank. She decided to visit a fellow nurse and neighbour, Sally O'Rourke, who also happened to be the owner of an extensive garden library. Margaret was hopeful that Sally may be able to help, but although they searched, it was again without luck. ‘I'm sure that I've read about it somewhere recently,’ Sally commented. After Margaret had left, Sally remembered that she had read of the rose in her recent birthday present, *A Hillside of Roses* by Susan Irvine. There Susan had described how she had acquired a wooden horse from ‘The Village Toymaker’, and after restoring it, placed it in a prominent position in the summerhouse ‘with a placard below saying “Lady Medallist – the name of Alister's first successful rose, bred in 1912, and one of his most successful racehorses. As yet we have found no trace of the rose.”’

Could this be it? Excited, Sally rang Margaret. The following day, Margaret spoke to Daisy to tell her the news and ask how she originally acquired the rose.

Daisy Maud Covey married James Arthur Summerfield

when he was invalided home from the First World War. Shortly afterwards they moved to a farming property at Whitaker's Mill, north of Dandalup, in the south-west of Western Australia. The Summerfields were keen gardeners, with James in particular loving roses and carnations which they purchased via a mail order catalogue from the Dawson and Harrison Nursery in Perth. This nursery, founded in 1903, produced glossy catalogues to tempt the gardening desires of those who could not easily visit their nursery. Daisy and James ordered many roses, including their three favourite, Lady Hillingdon, Marechal Neil and Lady Medallist (purchased in 1919) and planted them along the side of their home.

Taking with them cuttings from their roses, in 1928 the Summerfields moved to a farm at East Witchcliffe Mill, where of the three, only Lady Medallist survived. In 1934 they then moved to Perth, this time without their precious rose.

1934 saw them return to Witchcliffe to take over an abandoned farm on behalf of their son Cliff, who was still serving in the RAAF at the time. Keen to have their favourite rose again, the procured a cutting from Daisy's sister who had originally acquired her specimen from Daisy's first rose. The Summerfields eventually returned to a house in the town where they continued their gardening and establishing a hot house. A cutting of Lady Medallist went with them for what was to be their last garden.

Aged 86, Daisy finally went into permanent care where she died aged 101, just a week after being told that her favourite rose may be ‘the’ Lady Medallist, the missing link in Susan Irvine's collection of Alister Clark roses. Her son Cliff, on discovering the possible importance of the climber cleared away the native *Clematis aristata* which was threatening to choke it and gave a specimen some careful attention. Cuttings were also taken of the rose and sent to both a local nursery and the eastern states for propagation.

The rose would never win a prize at a show, according to Cliff, although it makes up for this with its vigour and prolific flowering. The Heritage Rose Society in Western Australia still have to confirm the rose's credentials. However it would seem unlikely that Daisy could have been wrong. As any lover of roses would confirm, who could mistake their favourite, even at age 100?

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